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# THE TESTAMENT OF BEAUTY

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*Robert Bridges*  
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# THE TESTAMENT OF BEAUTY

*A Poem in Four Books*

*by*

ROBERT BRIDGES

POET LAUREATE



*Oxford*

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1930





TO  
THE KING



# THE TESTAMENT OF BEAUTY

## *Book One*

### INTRODUCTION

**M**ORTAL Prudence, handmaid of divine Providence,  
hath inscrutable reckoning with Fate and Fortune:  
We sail a changeful sea through halcyon days and storm,  
and when the ship laboureth, our stedfast purpose  
trembles like as the compass in a binnacle.  
Our stability is but balance, and conduct lies  
in masterful administration of the unforeseen.

'Twas late in my long journey, when I had clomb to where  
the path was narrowing and the company few,  
a glow of childlike wonder enthral'd me, as if my sense 10  
had come to a new birth purified, my mind enrapt  
re-awakening to a fresh initiation of life;  
with like surprise of joy as any man may know  
who rambling wide hath turn'd, resting on some hill-top  
to view the plain he has left, and sec'th it now out-spredd  
mapp'd at his feet, a landscape so by beauty estranged  
he scarce wil ken familiar haunts, nor his own home,  
maybe, where far it lieth, small as a faded thought.

Or as I well remember one highday in June  
bright on the seaward South-downs, where I had come afar 20

## I

on a wild garden planted years ago, and fenced  
thickly within live-beechen walls: the season it was  
of prodigal gay blossom, and man's skill had made  
a fair-order'd husbandry of thatt nativ pleasaunce:  
But had ther been no more than earth's wild loveliness,  
the blue sky and soft air and the unmown flowersprent lawns,  
I would hav lain me down and long'd, as then I did,  
to lie there ever indolently undisturb'd, and watch  
the common flowers that starr'd the fine grass of the wold,  
waving in gay display their gold-heads to the sun, 30  
each telling of its own incontinent happiness,  
each type a faultless essence of God's will, such gems  
as magic master-minds in painting or music  
threw aside once for man's regard or disregard;  
things supreme in themselves, eternal, unnumber'd  
in the unexplored necessities of Life and Love.

To such a mood I had come, by what charm I know not,  
where on thatt upland path I was pacing alone;  
and yet was nothing new to me, only all was vivid  
and significant that had been dormant or dead: 40  
as if in a museum the fossils on their shelves  
should come to life suddenly, or a winter rose-bed  
burst into crowded holiday of scent and bloom.  
I felt the domination of Nature's secret urge,  
and happy escape therein; as when in boyhood once

from the rattling workshops of a great factory  
 conducted into the engine-room I stood in face  
 of the quiet driving power, that fast in nether cave  
 seated, set all the floors a-quiver, a thousand looms  
 throbbing and jennies dancing; and I felt at heart  
 a kinship with it and sympathy, as children wil  
 with amicable monsters: for in truth the mind  
 is indissociable from what it contemplates,  
 as thirst and generous wine are to a man that drinketh  
 nor kenneth whether his pleasur is more in his desire  
 or in the savor of the rich grape that allays it.

50

Man's Reason is in such deep insolvency to sense,  
 that tho' she guide his highest flight heav'nward, and teach him  
 dignity morals manners and human comfort,  
 she can delicatly and dangerously bedizen  
 the rioting joys that fringe the sad pathways of Hell.  
 Nor without alliance of the animal senses  
 hath she any miracle: Lov'st thou in the blithe hour  
 of April dawns—nay marvelest thou not—to hear  
 the ravishing music that the small birdēs make  
 in garden or woodland, rapturously heralding  
 the break of day; when the first lark on high hath warn'd  
 the vigilant robin already of the sun's approach,  
 and he on slender pipe calleth the nesting tribes  
 to awake and fill and thrill their myriad-warbling throats

60

70

# I

praising life's God, untill the blisful revel grow  
in wild profusion unfeign'd to such a hymn as man  
hath never in temple or grove pour'd to the Lord of heav'n?

Hast thou then thought that all this ravishing music,  
that stirreth so thy heart, making thee dream of things  
illimitable unsearchable and of heavenly import,  
is but a light disturbance of the atoms of air,  
whose jostling ripples, gather'd within the ear, are tuned  
to resonant scale, and thence by the enthron'd mind received  
on the spiral stairway of her audience chamber 80  
as heralds of high spiritual significance?  
and that without thine ear, sound would hav no report,  
Nature hav no music; nor would ther be for thee  
any better melody in the April woods at dawn  
than what an old stone-deaf labourer, lying awake  
o' night in his comfortless attic, might perchance  
be aware of, when the rats run amok in his thatch?

Now since the thoughtless birds not only act and enjoy  
this music, but to their offspring teach it with care,  
handing on those small folk-songs from father to son 90  
in such faithful tradition that they are familiar  
unchanging to the changeful generations of men—  
and year by year, listening to himself the nightingale  
as amorous of his art as of his brooding mate  
practiseth every phrase of his espousal lay,  
and still provoketh envy of the lesser songsters

# I

with the same notes that woke poetic eloquence  
 alike in Sophocles and the sick heart of Keats—  
 see then how deeply seated is the urgency whereto  
 Bach and Mozart obey'd, or those other minstrels 100  
 who pioneer'd for us on the marches of heav'n  
 and paid no heed to wars that swept the world around,  
 nor in their homes wer more troubled by cannon-roar  
 than late the small birds wer, that nested and carol'd  
 upon the devastated battlefields of France.

Birds are of all animals the nearest to men  
 for that they take delight in both music and dance,  
 and gracefully schooling leisure to enliven life  
 wer the earlier artists: moreover in their airy flight  
 (which in its swiftness symbolesh man's soaring thought) 110  
 they hav no rival but man, and easily surpass  
 in their free voyaging his most desperate daring,  
 altho' he hath fed and sped his ocean-ships with fire;  
 and now, disturbing me as I write, I hear on high  
 his roaring airplanes, and idly raising my head  
 see them there; like a migratory flock of birds  
 that rustle southward from the cold fall of the year  
 in order'd phalanx—so the thin-rankt squadrons ply,  
 til sound and sight failing me they are lost in the clouds.

Man's happiness, his flaunting honey'd flower of soul, 120  
 is his loving response to the wealth of Nature.



# I

Beauty is the prime motiv of all his excellence,  
 his aim and peaceful purpose; whereby he himself  
 becoming a creator hath often a thought to ask  
 why Nature, being so inexhaustible of beauty,  
 should not be all-beauteous; why, from infinit resource,  
 produce more ugliness than human artistry  
 with any spiritual intention can allow?

Wisdom wil repudiate thee, if thou think to enquire  
 WHY things are as they are or whence they came: thy task 130  
 is first to learn WHAT IS, and in pursuant knowledge  
 pure intellect wil find pure pleasur and the only ground  
 for a philosophy conformable to truth.

And wouldst thou play Creator and Ordinator of things,  
 be Nature then thy Chaos and be thou her God!

Whereafter, if in spirit dishearten'd and distress'd  
 to find evil with good, ugly with beautiful  
 proffer'd by Nature indifferently without shame,  
 thou wilt proceed to judge, but in conning thy brief  
 suspect the prejudice of human self-regard 140  
 distinguishing moralities where never is none—  
 thou art come round wrongfully again to question Nature,  
 who by her own faculty in thee judgeth herself:

to impugn thy verdict is to unseat thatt judge.

And science vindicateth the appeal to Reason  
 which is no less Nature's prescriptiv oracle  
 for being in all her plan so small and tickle a thing:

# I

How small a thing! if things immeasurable allow  
a greater and less (and thought wil reckon some thoughts great,  
prolific, everlasting; other some again 150  
small and contemptible) say then, How small a part  
of Universal Mind can conscient Reason claim!

'Tis to the unconscious mind as the habitable crust  
is to the mass of the earth; this crust whereon we dwell  
whereon our loves and shames are begotten and buried,  
our first slime and ancestral dust: 'Tis, to compare,  
thinner than o'er a luscious peach the velvet skin  
that we rip off to engorge the rich succulent pulp:  
Wer but our planet's sphere so peel'd, flay'd of the rind  
that wraps its lava and rock, the solar satellite 160  
would keep its motions in God's orrery undisturb'd.

Yea: and how delicat! Life's mighty mystery  
sprang from eternal seeds in the elemental fire,  
self-animat in forms that fire annihilates:  
all its selfpropagating organisms exist  
only within a few degrees of the long scale  
ranging from measured zero to unimagin'd heat,  
a little oasis of Life in Nature's desert;  
and ev'n therein are our soft bodies vext and harm'd  
by their own small distemperature, nor coud they endure 170  
wer't not that by a secret miracle of chemistry  
they hold internal poise upon a razor-edge  
that may not ev'n be blunted, lest we sicken and die.

# I

This Intellect, whereby above the other species  
 Mankind assumeth genus in a rank apart,  
 is nascent also in brutes, and of their bloodkinship  
 as fair a warranty as our common passions are,  
 our common bones and muscles, skin and nerves of sense.  
 But because human sorrow springeth of man's thought,  
 some men hav fal'n unhappily to envy the brutes  
 who for mere lack of reason, love life and enjoy  
 existence without care: and in some sort doubtless  
 happier are they than many a miserable man,  
 whether in disease or misfortune outclass'd from life  
 or thru' the disillusion of Lust wreck'd in remorse:  
 Corruption of best is ever the worst corruption.

180

'Tis true ther is no balance to weigh these goods and ills  
 nor any measur of them, like as of colour and heat  
 in their degrees; they are incommensurable in kind.  
 'Tis with mere pleasur and pain as if they, being so light,  
 could not this way or thatt deflect Life's monarch-beam;  
 for howso deliberately a man may wish for death  
 still wil he instinctivly fight to the last for life.  
 Yet with the burden of thought pains are of great moment,  
 and sickening thought itself engendereth corporal pain:  
 But likewise also of pleasure—here too Reason again,  
 whether in prospect or memory, is the greater part;

190

# I

our hope is ever livelier than despair, our joy  
 livelier and more abiding than our sorrows are,  
 which leak away untill no taint remain; their seeds 200  
 shriveling too thin to lodge in Memory's hustled sieve.  
 Wherefore I assert:—if Reason's only function wer  
 to heighten our pleasure, thatt wer vindication enough;  
 For what wer pleasur if never contemplation gave  
 a spiritual significance to objects of sense,  
 nor in thought's atmosphere poetic vision arose?

Brutes hav their keener senses far outrangeing ours  
 nor without here and there some adumbration of soul:  
 But the sensuous intuition in them is steril,  
 'tis the bare cloth whereon our rich banquet is spredd; 210  
 and so the sorrowful sufferer who envied their state,  
 wer he but granted his blind wish to liv as they  
 —whether 'twere lark or lion, or some high-antler'd stag  
 in startled pose of his fantastic majesty  
 gazing adown the glade—he would draw blank, nor taste  
 the human satisfaction of his release from care:  
 as well be a sloven toad in his dark hole: Unlike  
 those damn'd souls by the Harpies tantalized in Hell  
 whose tortur it was to see their ostentatious feast  
 snatch'd from their reach—but he sitting with the dainties 220  
 out-spredd before him would see them, nor ever feel  
 any desire nor memory of their old relish.

# I

This quarrel and dissatisfaction of man with Nature  
 springeth of a vision which beareth assurance  
 of the diviner principle implicit in Life:  
 And mystic Vision may so wholly absorb a man  
 that he wil loathe ev'n pleasure, mortifying the flesh  
 by disciplin of discomfort so to strengthen his faith.  
 Thus tho' 'twas otherwise than on Plato's ladder  
 that Francis climb'd—rather his gentle soul had learn'd 230  
 from taste of vanity and by malease of the flesh—  
 he abjured as worthless ev'n what good men wil call good,  
 and standing forth, as chivalrous knight and champion  
 of holiness, in his devotion of heart to God,  
 all earthly sun-joys seem'd so transitory and vain  
 that soon the unseen took shape to common eyes; the folk  
 cumber'd him with servility, and his memory  
 is beatified in the admiration of all mankind.

Now his following in life and his fame thereafter  
 confute the lower school of Ethick, which would teach 240  
 that spiritual ideas are but dream-stuff in men:  
 For Francis admitted no compromise nor gloss  
 whereby the Church had thought to ease the easy yoke  
 which he reshoulder'd as his Master had offer'd it,  
 and espousing Poverty as the outcast widow of Christ  
 would walk in Umbria as He walk'd in Galilee  
 founding the kingdom of God among those angry Jews  
 who made earthly rebellion against Cæsar's empire:

and in imitation and compassion of Jesus  
 would touch nothing but what had been bless'd at his lips: 250  
 For the morrow hav no more care than a lily hath—  
 for his head no more shelter than a beast of the field—  
 no purse nor scrip for his journey, and but one garment—  
 and scorning intellect and pursuit of knowledge  
 liv'd as a bare spirit in its low prison of flesh,  
 untill thru' tribulation he should win to peace,  
*quam mundus nobis dare non potest pacem,*  
 in those eternal mansions where Dante found him  
 among the Just. Yet ev'n Francis coud praise Nature,  
 tho' from such altitude whatever pictur is drawn 260  
 must be out of focus of our terrestrial senses.

'Twas thus he made, when he lay sick in Damian,  
 his hymn in honour of God and praise of his creatures;  
 All-first and specially of the Sun whom he calleth  
 his honourable brother and symbol of Very God;  
 and then the Moon his sister, and all the stars of heav'n  
 the clouds and winds his kindred; and of the Earth he saith—  
*Praisèd be thou, my Lord, for my sister, Mother Earth,*  
*who doth sustain and govern us and bringeth forth*  
*all manner of fruit and herb and flowers of myriad hue. 270*  
 In direst pain of body and despond of soul he ask'd  
 but for this Bencitè to be sung by his bed,  
 fleeing for sanctuary to the bond of Nature—  
 "the inconceivable high works unfathomable

# I

whose aspect giveth the Angels strength, and men  
revere the gentle changes of the day.”—

The sky's unresting cloudland, that with varying play  
sifteth the sunlight thru' its figured shades, that now  
stand in massiv range, cumulated stupendous  
mountainous snowbillowy up-piled in dazzling sheen, 280  
Now like sailing ships on a calm ocean drifting,  
Now scatter'd wispy waifs, that neath the eager blaze  
disperse in air; Or now parcelling the icy inane  
highspredd in fine diaper of silver and mother-of-pearl  
freaking the intense azure; Now scurrying close o'erhead,  
wild ink-hued random racers that fling sheeted rain  
gustily, and with garish bows laughing o'erarch the land:  
Or, if the spirit of storm be abroad, huge molten glooms  
mount on the horizon stealthily, and gathering as they climb  
deep-freighted with live lightning, thunder and drenching flood 290  
rebuff the winds, and with black-purpling terror impend  
til they be driven away, when grave Night peacefully  
clearing her heav'nly rondure of its turbid veils  
layeth bare the playthings of Creation's babyhood;  
and the immortal fireballs of her uttermost space  
twinkle like friendly rushlights on the countryside.

Them soon the jealous Day o'errideth to display  
Earth's green robe, which the sun fostereth for shelter and shower  
The dance of young trees that in a wild birch-spinney

# I

toss to and fro the cluster of their flickering crests, 300  
 as rye curtseying in array to the breeze of May;  
 The ancestral trunks that mightily in the forest choirs  
 rear steadfast colonnade, or imperceptibly

sway in tall pinewoods to their whispering spires;  
 The woodland's alternating hues, the vaporous bloom  
 of the first blushings and tender flushings of spring;  
 The slumbrous foliage of high midsummer's wealth;  
 Rich Autumn's golden quittance, to the bankruptcy  
 of the black shapely skeletons standing in snow:  
 Or, in gay months of swelling pomp, the luxury 310  
 of leisur'd gardens teeming with affection'd thought;  
 the heartfelt secrecy of rustic nooks, and valleys  
 vocal with angelic rilling of rocky streams,  
 by rambling country-lanes, with hazel and thorn embower'd  
 woodbine, bryony and wild roses; the landscape lure  
 of rural England, that held glory in native art  
 untill our painters took their new fashion from France.

This spiritual elation and response to Nature  
 is Man's generic mark. A wolf that all his life  
 had hunted after nightfall neath the starlit skies 320  
 should he suddenly attain the first inklings of thought  
 would feel this Wonder: and by some kindred stir of mind  
 the ruminants can plead approach—the look of it  
 is born already of fear and gentleness in the eyes



# I

of the wild antelope, and hence by fable assign'd  
to the unseen unicorn reposed in burning lair—  
a symbol of majestic sadness and lonely pride:  
but the true intellectual wonder is first reveal'd  
in children and savages and 'tis there the footing  
of all our temples and of all science and art.

330

Thus Rafaël once venturing to show God in Man  
gave a child's eyes of wonder to the baby Christ;  
and his Mantuan brother could he have seen that picture  
would more truly have foreshadow'd the incarnation of God.  
'Tis divinest childhood's incomparable bloom,  
the loss whereof leaveth the man's face shabby and dull.

SEEKING unceasingly for the First Cause of All,  
in question for what special Purpose he was made,  
Man, in the unsearchable darkness, knoweth one thing  
that as he is, so was he made: and if the Essence  
and characteristic faculty of humanity  
is our conscient Reason and our desire of knowledge,  
that was Nature's Purpose in the making of man.

340

But can there be any Will or Purpose in Nature?  
that Universe external to our percipient sense,  
which when we examine itself we think only to find  
a structure of blind atoms to their habits enslaved,

# I

or else, examining our senses, suspect to be  
a dream of empty appearance and vain imagery.—

As a man thru' a window into a darken'd house 350  
peering vainly wil see, always and easily,  
the glass surface and his own face mirror'd thereon,  
tho' looking from another angle, or hooding his eyes  
he may discern some real objects within the room—  
some say 'tis so with us, and also affirm that they  
by study of their reflection hav discover'd in truth  
ther is nothing but thatt same reflection inside the house.

See how they hav made o' the window an impermeable wall  
partitioning man off from the rest of nature  
with stronger impertinence than Science can allow. 360  
Man's mind, Nature's entrusted gem, her own mirror  
cannot bē isolated from her other works  
by self-abstraction of its unique fecundity  
in the new realm of his transcendent life;—  
Not emotion or imagination ethick or art  
logic of science nor dialectic discourse,  
not ev'n thatt supersensuous sublimation of thought,  
the euristic vision of mathematical trance,  
hath any other foundation than the common base  
of Nature's building:—not even his independence 370  
of will, his range of knowledge, and spiritual aim,  
can separate him off from the impercipient:  
Altho' his mind be such that it might seem as if

# I

true Individuality within the species  
 were peculiar to man: So foolish is he, and wise,—  
 despondent and hopeful, patient and complaining,  
 courageous and cowardly, diffident and vain,  
 cringing and commanding, industrious and idle,  
 cruel and tenderhearted, truthful and perfidious,  
 imaginativ or dull—one man how loveable  
 another how hateful, alike man, brutal or divine.

380

Whereamong hath the sceptic honourable place,  
 thatt old iconoclast who coud destroy the gods  
 soon as men made them, vain imagery and unworthy,  
 low symbols of the Eternal that standeth unchanged.  
 Like some medicinal root in pharmacy, whose juice  
 is wholesom for purgation,—so is he—and if Truth  
 be thatt which Omniscience would assert of all things,  
 we may grant him his motto “Truth is not for man”.  
 But from his sleepy castle he wil be tempted forth  
 if ever a hunting-horn echo in the woods around,  
 for he loveth the chase, and, like a good sportsman,  
 his hounds and his weapons as he loveth the prey.

390

So musing all my days with unceasing wonder  
 and encountering many phases of many minds,  
 thru’ kindly environment of my disposition  
 I grew, as all things grow, in the pattern of Self;  
 til stumbling early upon the mystic words, whereby

# I

—in the Semitic matrix of my father's creed—  
 Jahveh reveal'd his secret Being to the Jews, 400  
 and conning those large letters I AM THAT I AM  
 I wonder'd finding only my own thought of myself,  
 and reading there that man was made in God's image  
 knew not yet that God was made in the image of man;  
 nor the profounder truth that both these truths are one,  
 no quibbling scoff—for surely as mind in man groweth  
 so with his manhood groweth his idea of God,  
 wider ever and worthier, untill it may contain  
 and reconcile in reason all wisdom passion and love,  
 and bring at last (may God so grant) Christ's Peace on Earth. 410

Nor could it ever dwell in my possible thought  
 that whatsoever grew and groweth can be unlike  
 in cause and substance to the thing it groweth on:  
 Thus I saw Conscience as a natural flower-bud  
 on its vigorous plant specialized to a function  
 marvelously, a blossom first unique in design  
 of beauty, in colour and form, thickening therefrom to a fruit  
 productiv to infinit regeneration; and yet  
 this bud—as any primer of botany can teach—  
 is but a differentiation of the infertile leaf, 420  
 which held all this miracle in intrinsic potency.

Thus science would teach, and Heraclitus, I say,  
 was not the least among the sages of Hellas,  
 Nor those fire-worshippers foolish who, seeing the Sun

# I

to be the efficient cause of all life upon earth,  
welcomed his full effulgence for their symbol of God.  
And since we observe in all existence four stages—  
Atomic, Organic, Sensuous, and Selfconscient—  
and must conceive these in gradation, it was no flaw  
in Leibnitz to endow his monad-atoms with Mind: 430  
tho' in our schools of thought "unconscious mind" is call'd  
a contradiction in terms; as if the embranglements  
of logic wer the prime condition of all Being,  
the essence of things; and man in the toilsome journey  
from conscience of nothing to conscient ignorance  
mistook his tottery crutch for the main organ of life.

'Tis laughable that man should fondle such surprise  
at animal behaviour, seeing some beetle or fly  
—whose very existence is so negligible and brief—  
act more intelligently than he might himself 440  
had he been there to advise with all his pros and cons,  
his cause, effect and means: Such conduct he wil style  
"Marvels of Instinct", but what sort of wisdom is this  
that mistaketh the exception for the general rule  
and the rule for the exception? Since the animal world  
immeasurably outnumbereth the species of man,  
and wholly is ruled by Instinct: 'Tis the Reason of man  
that is the exception and marvel; nay, 'tis plain to see  
how, as our Life is animal so also our conduct

# I

is mainly instinctiv, while pure Reason left to herself 450  
 relieth on axioms and essential premises  
 which she can neither question nor resolve, things far  
 beyond her, holding her anchor in eternal Mind,  
 characteristic universals, the firm rock  
 whereon her lofty watch-towers are planted, and all  
 her star-gazing observatories built.

Wise thinkers do homage to good fellow-thinkers,  
 nor disregard the general commonsense of man  
 —that untouch'd photograph of external Nature  
 self-pictur'd for us nakedly on her own mirror:— 460  
 and tho' common opinion may be assent in error  
 ther is little or none accord in philosophic thought:  
 this picklock Reason is still a-fumbling at the wards,  
 bragging to unlock the door of stern Reality.  
 Ask what is reasonable! See how time and clime  
 conform mind more than body in their environment;  
 what then and there was Reason, is here and now absurd;  
 what I now chance to approve, may be or become to others  
 strange and unpalatable as now appear to me  
 the weighty sentences of the angelic Doctor: 470  
 For I rank it among the unimaginables  
 how Saint Thomas, with all his honesty and keen thought,  
 toiling to found an irrefragable system  
 of metaphysic, ethic and theologic truth,

# I

should with open eyes hav accepted for main premiss  
the myth of a divine fiasco, on which to assure  
the wisdom of God; leading to a foregon conclusion  
of illachrymable logic, a monstrous scheme  
*horrendum informe ingens cui Lumen ademptum.*

Some would say that the Saint himself held not the faith 480  
which universal credit compell'd him to assume  
if he would lead and teach the Church: But so to think  
(as tho' 'twas but the best gambit to open his game)  
wer to his acumen and his honesty alike unjust.  
I am happier in surmising that his vision at Mass  
—in Naples it was when he fell suddenly in trance—  
was some disenthralment of his humanity;  
for thereafter, whether 'twere Aristotle or Christ  
that had appear'd to him then, he nevermore wrote word  
neither dictated but laid by inkhorn and pen; 490  
and was as a man out of hearing on thatt day  
when Reynaldus, with all the importunity of zeal  
and intimacy of friendship, would hav recall'd him  
to his incompleted SUMMA; and sighing he reply'd

*I wil tell thee a secret, my son, constraining thee  
lest thou dare impart it to any man while I liv.  
My writing is at end. I hav seen such things reveal'd  
that what I hav written and taught seemeth to me of small worth.  
And hence I hope in my God, that, as of doctrin  
ther wil be speedily also an end of Life!* 500

# I

THER is no tradition among the lemmings of Norway  
 how their progenitors, when their offspring increased,  
 bravely forsook their crowded nestes in the snow,  
 swarming upon the plains to ravage field and farm,  
 and in unswerving course ate their way to the coast,  
 where plunging down the rocks they swam in the salt sea  
 to drowning death; nor hav they in acting thus today  
 any plan for their journey or prospect in the event.

But clerks and chroniclers wer many in Christendom,  
 when France and Germany pour'd out the rabblement 510  
 of the second Crusade, and its record is writ;  
 its leaders' titles, kings and knights of fair renown,  
 their resolve and design: and yet for all their vows,  
 their consecrating crosses and embroider'd flags,  
 the eloquent preaching of Saint Bernard, and the wiles  
 of thatt young amorous amazon, Queen Eleanòr,  
 they wer impell'd as madly, journey'd as blindly  
 and perish'd as miserably as the thoughtless voles,  
 by disease starvation and massacre, or enslaved  
 by wrath of the folk whose homes they had wreckt and ravaged; 520  
 til of the unnumber'd rout a poor remnant fled back,  
 the shame of humanity for their folly and crimes.

Reason, shamefast at heart and vain above measure,  
 would look to find the firstfruits of intelligence



# I

showing some provident correction of man's estate  
 to'ard social order, a wise discriminat purpose  
 in clear contrast against the blind habits of brutes:  
 And when our honest hope turneth away repell'd  
 by the terror and superstition of savagery  
 —wherein nascent Reason seemeth to hav hoodwink'd Mind,—  
 if we read but of Europe since the birth of Christ, 531  
 'tis still incompetent disorder, all a lecture  
 of irredeemable shame; the wrongs and sufferings  
 alike of kings and clowns are a pitiful tale.

Follow the path of those fair warriors, the tall Goths,  
 from the day when they led their blue-eyed families  
 off Vistula's cold pasture-lands, their murky home  
 by the amber-strewn foreshore of the Baltic sea,  
 and in the incontaminat vigor of manliness  
 feeling their rumour'd way to an unknown promised land, 540  
 tore at the ravel'd fringes of the purple power,  
 and trampling its wide skirts, defeating its armies,  
 slaying its Emperor, and burning his cities,  
 sack'd Athens and Rome; untill supplanting Cæsar  
 they ruled the world where Romans reign'd before:—  
 Yet from those three long centuries of rapin and blood,  
 inhumanity of heart and wanton cruelty of hand,  
 ther is little left, save the broken relic of one  
 good bishop, and the record of one noble king,  
 —who both had suck'd their virtue from the wither'd dugs 550

# I

of learning, where she lay sickening within the walls  
of rich Byzance:—Those Goths wer strong but to destroy;  
they neither wrote nor wrought, thought not nor created;  
but since the field was rank with tares and mildew'd wheat,  
their scything won some praise: Else hav they left no trace,  
save for their share in thatt rich mingled character  
of Hebrew, Roman, Vandal, Mussulman and Kelt,  
that spoke the pride of Spain, to stand for ever alive  
in one grandesque effigy of ennobled folly,  
among fair Beauty's fairest offspring unproved.

560

Yet for this intellectual laughter—deem it not  
true Wisdom's panoply. The wise wil live by Faith,  
faith in the order of Nature and that her order is good.  
'Twer scepticism in them to cherish make-believe,  
creeds and precise focusings of the unsearchable:  
at such things they may smile; yet for man's ignorance  
and frailty the only saving consolation is faith,  
the which theologians tell us is the gift of God,  
as other good things are, and laughter is one of them;  
and sharing of man's Essence 'twil be at height in him  
when 'tis the laughter of Reason—enjoyable; and 'tis fit  
that he should show Nature this courtesy, and kindly  
make light of all the troubles that compel no tears:  
—Cervantes in misfortune when a galley-slave  
wept not—but where sorrow is sacred humour is dumb,  
and in full calamity it is madness: wherefore

570

# I

Hamlet himself would never hav been aught to us, or we  
to Hamlet, wer't not for the artful balance whereby  
Shakespeare so gingerly put his sanity in doubt  
without the while confounding his Reason.

580

And tho' desire of perfection is Nature's promise  
we should not in the field of Reason look to find  
less vary and veer than elsewhere in the flux of Life:  
We may rather rejoice in the great abundance,  
the indigenous fruitage of our gay Paradise,  
that Persia, China and Babylon put forth their bloom,  
that India and Egypt wer seedplots of wisdom.  
The best part of our lives we are wanderers in Romance:  
Our fathers travel'd Eastward to revel in wonders  
where pyramid pagoda and picturesque attire  
glow in the fading sunset of antiquity;  
and now wil the Orientals make hither in return  
outlandish pilgrimage: their wiseacres hav seen  
the electric light i' the West, and come to worship;  
tasting romance in our unsightly novelties  
and scientific tricks; for all things in their day  
may hav opinion of glory: Glory is opinion,  
the vain doxology wherewith man would praise God.

590

Time eateth away at many an old delusion,  
yet with civilization delusions make head;

600

# I

the thicket of the people wil take furtiv fire  
 from irresponsible catchwords of live ideas,  
     sudden as a gorse-bush from the smouldering end  
 of any loiterer's match-splint, which, unless trodden out  
 afore it spredd, or quell'd with wieldy threshing-rods  
 wil burn ten years of planting with all last year's ricks  
 and blacken a countryside. 'Tis like enough that men  
 ignorant of fire and poison should be precondeemn'd  
 to sudden deaths and burnings, but 'tis mightily  
 to the reproach of Reason that she cannot save  
 nor guide the herd; that minds who else wer fit to rule  
 must win to power by flattery and pretence, and so  
 by spiritual dishonesty in their flurried reign  
 confirm the disrepute of all authority—  
 but only in sackcloth can the Muse speak of such things.

610

**WISDOM HATH HEWED HER HOUSE:** She that dwelleth alway  
 with God in the Evermore, afore any world was,  
 fashion'd the nascent Earth that the energy of its life  
 might come to evolution in the becoming of Man,  
 who, as her subject, should subjéct all to her rule  
 and bring God's latest work to be a realm of delight.  
 So she herself, the essential Beauty of Holiness,  
 pass'd her creativ joy into the creature's heart,  
 to take back from his hand her Adoration robes

620

# I

and royal crown of his Imagination and Love.

And when she had made of men lovers and worshippers,  
these vied to enshrine her godhead in enduring fanes  
and architectur of stone, that high her pensiv towers  
might hallow their throng'd cities and, transfeaturing  
Nature's wilding landscape to the impress of her Mind, 630  
comfort man's mortality with immortal grace.

Yet not to those colossal temples where old Nile  
guideth a ribbon oasis thru' the Libyan sands,  
depositing a kingdom from his fabled fount  
—like thatt twin-sister stream of slothful thought, whose flood  
fertilized the rude mind of Egypt—not to these,  
nor those Cyclopean tombs, which hieroglyphic kings  
uprear'd to hide their mummies from the common death,  
whereto their folk dragging the slow burdensome stones  
wer driven and fed like beasts, untill the pyramid 640  
in geometrical enormity peak'd true—  
'Tis not to these—nay nor in Gizeh to thatt Sphinx,  
grand solitary symbol of man's double nature,  
with lion body couchant and with human head  
gazing out vainly from the desert—not to these  
look we with grateful pleasur or satisfaction of soul,  
wonderfine tho' they be, and indestructible  
against sandblast of time and spoliation of man—  
nor tho' with sixty centuries of knowledge pass'd  
still those primeval sculptors shame our paltry style:— 650

# I

Nay ev'n so, not to these look we to find comfort;  
Not yet was Wisdom justified of her children.

Long had the homing bees plunder'd the thymy flanks  
of famed Hymettus harvesting their sweet honey:  
agelong the dancing waves had lapp'd the Ægean isles  
and promontories of the blue Ionian shore  
—where in her Mediterranean mirror gazing  
old Asia's dreamy face wrinkleth to a westward smile—  
and the wild olive, cleft-rooted in Attica,  
wreath'd but the rocks, afore the wandering Aryan tribes, 660  
whose Goddess was ATHENA, met, and in her right  
knew themselves lords of Hellas and the Achean land  
whereto they had come fighting, for their children to win  
heritage of Earth's empire. 'Twas their youthful tongue  
that Wisdom sought when her Egyptian kingdom fail'd,  
and choosing to be call'd Athena daughter of Zeus  
motion'd the marble to her living grace, and took  
her dwelling in the high-templed Acropolis  
of the fair city that still hath her name.

As some perfected flower, Iris or Lily, is born 670  
patterning heav'nly beauty, a pictur'd idea  
that hath no other expression for us, nor could hav:  
for thatt which Lily or Iris tell cannot be told  
by poetry or by music in their secret tongues,

# I

nor is discernible in logic, but is itself  
 an absolute piece of Being, and we know not,  
 nay, nor search not by what creativ miracle  
 the soul's language is writ in perishable forms—  
 yet are we aware of such existences crowding,  
 mysterious beauties unexpanded, unreveal'd, 680  
 phantasies intangible investing us closely,  
 hid only from our eyes by skies that wil not clear;  
 activ presences, striving to force an entrance,  
 like bodiless exiled souls in dumb urgency pleading  
 to be brought to birth in our conscient existence,  
 as if our troubled lot wer the life they long'd for;  
 even as poor mortals thirst for immortality:—  
 And every divination of Natur or reach of Art  
 is nearer attainment to the divine plenitude  
 of understanding, and in moments of Vision 690  
 their unseen company is the breath of Life:—

By such happy influence of their chosen goddess  
 the mind of Hellas blossom'd with a wondrous flow'r,  
 flaming in summer season, and in its autumn fall  
 ripening an everlasting fruit, that in dying  
 scatter'd its pregnant seeds unto all the winds of heav'n:  
 nor ever again hath like bloom appear'd among men.

Knowledge accumulath slowly and not in vain;

# I

with new attainment new orders of beauty arise,  
 in thought and art new values; but man's faculties 700  
 were gifted once for all and stand, 'twould seem, at stay:  
 Ther is now no higher intellect to brighten the world  
 than little Hellas own'd; nay scarcely here and there  
 liveth a man among us to rival their seers.

So might we fear that such implicit unity,  
 so friendly a passionat love for nature beauty and truth,  
 such dignity of the body tender of pride and shame,  
 such lively accord of Sense, Instinct, Reason and Spirit  
 as gazeth down on us with alien sovranity  
 from all their statuesque literature and art, 710  
 wer a grace (so might we fear) like the grace of childhood  
 lost in growth, a glory of the past, not to return.

Such 'twere vain to deplore; since true beauty of manhood  
 outfeatureth childish charm, and whether in men or things  
 Best is mature; tho' Beauty is neither growth nor strength;  
 for ugliness also groweth proudly and is strong.  
 Well might we ask what Beauty ever could liv or thrive  
 in our crowded democracy under governance  
 of such politic fancy as a farmer would show  
 who cultivated weeds in hope of good harvest: 720  
 and yet hath modern cultur enrich'd a wasting soil;  
 Science comforting man's animal poverty  
 and leisuring his toil, hath humanized manners  
 and social temper, and now above her globe-spredd net



# I

of speeded intercourse hath outrun all magic,  
 and disclosing the secrecy of the reticent air  
 hath woven a seamless web of invisible strands  
 spiriting the dumb inane with the quick matter of life:  
 Now music's prison'd raptur and the drown'd voice of truth  
 mantled in light's velocity, over land and sea 730  
 are omnipresent, speaking aloud to every ear,  
 into every heart and home their unhinder'd message,  
 the body and soul of Universal Brotherhood;  
 whereby war faln from savagery to fratricide,  
 from a trumpeting vainglory to a crying shame,  
 stalketh now with blasting curse branded on its brow.

And if the Greek Muses wer a graceful company  
 yet hav we two, that in maturity transcend  
 the promise of their baby-prattle in Time's cradle,  
 Musick and Mathematick: coud their wet-nurses 740  
 but see these foster-children upgrown in full stature,  
 Pythagoras would marvel and Athena rejoice.

And ev'n to Apollo's choir was a rich voice lacking  
 in the great symphonies of the poetic throng  
 who beneath Homer's crown enroll'd immortal names;  
 for without later names the full compass of song  
 had been unknown to man—nay and some English names,  
 whose younger voices in the imagination of love  
 swell'd to spiritual ecstasy, and emotion'd life  
 with mystic inspiration of new lyric rapture: 750

# I

and 'twas the first alluring gleam of thatt vision  
that stole by virtue of novelty the world away  
from the philosophic concinnity of Greek art,  
to abjure the severe ordering of its antique folds.

In love of fleshly prowess Hellas overesteem'd  
the nobility of passion and of animal strength,  
and the acclamation of their Olympic games outfaced  
spiritual combat;—as their forefathers wer they,  
those old seapirates, who with roving robbery  
built up their island lordships on the ruin of Crete, 760  
when the unforbearing rivalry of their free cities  
wreck'd their confederacy within the sevenscore years  
'twixt Marathon and Issus; untill from the pride  
of routing Xerxes and his fabulous host, they fell  
to make thatt most memorable of all invasions  
less memorable in the glory of Alexander,  
under whose alien kingship they conspired to outreach  
their own ambition, winning dominions too wide  
for domination; and wer, with their virtue, dispersed -  
and molten into the great stiffening alloy of Rome. 770

So it was when Jesus came in his gentleness  
with his divine compassion and great Gospel of Peace,  
men hail'd him WORD OF GOD, and in the title of Christ  
crown'd him with love beyond all earth-names of renown.

For He, wandering unarm'd save by the Spirit's flame,

## I

in few years with few friends founded a world-empire  
wider than Alexander's and more enduring;  
since from his death it took its everlasting life.

His kingdom is God's kingdom, and his holy temple  
not in Athens or Rome but in the heart of man.

780

They who understand not cannot forget, and they  
who keep not his commandment call him Master and Lord.

He preach'd once to the herd, but now calleth the wise,  
and shall in his second Advent, that tarried long,  
be glorified by the Greeks that come to the feast:

But the great Light shineth in great darkness, the seed  
that fell by the wayside hath been trodden under foot,  
thatt which fell on the Rock is nigh wither'd away;  
While loud and louder thro' the dazed head of the SPHINX  
the old lion's voice roareth o'er all the lands.

790

# THE TESTAMENT OF BEAUTY

## *Book Two*

### SELFHOOD

THE VISION OF THE SEER who saw the Spirit of Man.  
A chariot he beheld speeding twixt earth and heaven  
drawn by wing'd horses, and the charioteer thereon  
upright with eyes upon the goal and mind alert  
controlling his strong steeds, that spurn'd the drifted cloud  
as now they sank now mounted in their heav'nward flight.

Thus Plato recordeth—how Socrates told it  
to Phædrus on a summer morning, as they sat  
beneath a lofty plane-tree by the grassy banks  
of the Ilissus, talking of the passions of men.

10

The Vision of the Seer is Truth's Apocalypse,  
yet needeth for our aid a true interpreter.  
The names of the two horses are SELFHOOD and BREED,  
the charioteer is REASON, and the whip in his hand  
is not to urge-on the steeds nor to incite their blood;  
their mettle is everlasting and they need no goad:  
He wieldeth it to make them ware of his presence  
and hold them obedient to the rein of his Will.  
But this picture drafted in Mind's creativ cave,  
and thence on the eye projected, thin is as the film

20

## II

of colour and shade on a canvas, ther is nought beneath:  
it telleth not who bred those wild horses, or broke  
their strong necks to the yoke, nor who builded the car,  
and harness'd them therto for its high heav'nly flight;  
nor how REASON ever mounted it in full career  
and took the reins, nor of what stuff intangible  
they are woven, those reins pictured so taut in his grasp;  
nay, for not he himself kenneth well of these things:  
Yet truly is he portray'd fearless and glad of heart,  
his lash circling o'erhead, as smiling on his steeds  
he speaketh to them lovingly in his praise or blame. 30

Now these two horses, without which the wheels of Life  
would never hav had motion, and with them can hav no rest,  
are the animal instincts in the birthright of man;  
nor are they, as Plato fancied, one evil and one good:  
both are good, but of their wildness they are restiv both  
and wilful, nor wil yield mastery, unless they feel  
the hand of expert manage and good horsemanship.  
Selfhood is the elder and stronger; but Breed, once her foal,  
is livelier and of limb finer and more mettlesome, 40  
her rival now, and both wil pull together as one.

'Tis first to tell of Selfhood, since the first one thing,  
if ever a first thing wer, was of the Essence of Self.

## II

Consider a plant—its life—how a seed faln to ground  
sucketh in moisture for its germinating cells,  
and as it sucketh swelleth, til it burst its case  
and thrusting its roots downward and spreading them wide  
taketh tenure of the soil, and from ev'ry raindrop  
on its dribbling passage to replenish the springs  
plundereth the freighted salt, while it pricketh upright 50  
with its flagstaff o'erhead for a place in the sun,  
anon to disengage buds that in tender leaves  
unfolding may inhale provender of the ambient air:  
and, tentacles or tendrils, they search not blindly  
but each one headeth straightly for its readiest prey;  
and haply, if the seed be faln in a place of darkness  
roof'd in by men—if ther should be any ray or gleam  
how faint soe'er, 'twil crane and reach its pallid stalk  
pushing at the crevice ev'n to disrupt the stones.

'Tis of such absolute selfhood that it knoweth not 60  
parent nor offspring, and will abuse advantage  
of primogeniture, with long luxuriant boughs  
crowding in vain-glory to overshadow and quell  
its younger brethren; while, as for its own children  
that, cradled on its branches, fell from its fruitage,  
'twil choke them when they strive to draw life at its feet.

Look now upon a child of man when born to light,  
how otherwise than a plant sucketh he and clutcheth?  
how with his first life-breath he clarioneth for food!

## II

craving as the blind fledgelings in a thrush's nest 70  
that perk their naked necks, stiff as a chimney-stack,  
food-funnels, like as hoppers in a corn-mill gaping  
for what supply the feeder may shovel in their throats.  
How differeth the new-born child from plant or fledgeling?

Among low organisms some are call'd animal  
for being unrooted, else inseparable from plants;  
yet each in his small motion is as a lion on prowl,  
or as a python gliding to seize and devour  
some weaker Self, whereby to fortify his own.  
And if Selfhood thus rule thru' out organic life 80  
'tis no far thought that all the dumb activities  
in atom or molecule are like phenomena  
of individuat Selfhood in its first degrees.

This Autarchy of Selfhood, which we blame not at all  
in plants and scarcely in brutes, is by Reason denounced  
heartless, and outlaw'd from the noble temper of man,  
the original sin and cause of half his woes and shames;  
whence Natur again would seem at variance with herself,  
misdoubting the foundation whereon she had built all,  
and seeing too late the fault threatening to split her house 90  
would buttress it with the outwork of an afterthought.  
But tho' 'tis only Reason can govern this horse,  
correction awaited not the human charioteer;  
Selfhood had of itself begotten its own restraint—

## II

like as small plague-microbes generate their own toxin  
in antidote of their own mischief (so 'tis said):

Even among beasts of prey the bloody wolves, who found  
some selfish betterment from their hunting in packs,  
had thereby learn'd submission to a controlling will,  
their leader being so far charioteer of their rage;

100

while pastoral animals, or ever a drover came  
to pen them for his profit, had in self-defence  
herded together; and on the wild prairies are seen  
when threaten'd by attack, congregating their young  
within their midst for safety, and then serrying their ranks  
in a front line compact to face the dreaded foe.

And this parental instinct, tho' it own cousinship  
with Breed, was born of Selfhood. A nursing mammal,  
since she must feel her suckling a piece of herself,  
wil self-preserve and shelter it as herself; and oft  
'tis hard to wean. So birds, by long brooding inured,  
wil watch their chickens heedfully, and fearfully attend  
their early excursions, guiding aiding and at need  
defending against danger. It is pretty to mark  
a partridge, when she hath first led forth her brood to run  
among the grass-tussocks or hay-stubbles of June,  
if man or beast approach them, how to usurp regard  
she counterfeith the terror of a wounded bird  
draggling a broken wing, and noisily enticeth  
or provoketh the foe to follow her in a vain chase;

110

120



## II

nor wil she desist from the ruse of her courage  
to effect her own escape in loud masterful flight,  
untill she hav far decoy'd hunter or blundering hoof  
from where she has bid her little ones to scatter and hide.

In man this blind motherly attachment is the spring  
of his purest affection, and of all compassion,—  
the emotion most inimical to war: I deem  
its form of unimpeachable sincerity  
to be the mould wherein Friendship's full faith is cast.  
But richest fruits are tardy in ripening, and man's mind 130  
on the last topmost branch, fed from the deepest root,  
struggleth slowly to birth thru' long-enforced delay.  
See nature's habit now devolving upon man,  
and in his Reason her patience as virtue reborn.  
First wil be many months of bodily helplessness,  
then many years ere the fine budding spirit uncloze.  
Wherewhile a new spiritual personality  
in its miraculous significance, the child  
is less the mother's own than a treasur entrusted,  
which she can never love too fondly or serve too well; 140  
Nay, rather is she possess'd by her own possession,  
and in her *VITA NUOVA* *such things are reveal'd*  
*that all she hath thought or done seemeth to her of small worth.*  
The unfathomable mystery of her awaken'd joy  
sendeth her daily to heaven on her knees in prayer:

## II

and watching o'er the charm of a soul's wondering dawn  
enamoureth so her spirit, that all her happiness  
is in her care for him, all hope in his promise;  
and his nobility is the dream-goal of her life.

In the sunshine of her devotion, her peace and joy 150  
are mirror'd in the child's mind, and would leave thereon  
no place for sin, could all be purified to attain;  
but in the most the mind is gross and the spirit bleak;  
and for a generation needing an outward sign  
of this transcendent mystery, 'twas well when Art  
fashioning a domestic symbol in worship of Christ  
pictured him as an infant in his Mother's arms,  
sharing with her his suffering and glory—it was well:  
Nor count I any scripture to be better inspired  
with eternal wisdom or by insight of man 160  
than the four words wherewith the sad penitent hymn  
calleth aloud on Mary standing neath the cross:  
EIA MATER, it saith, MATER FONDS AMORIS.

Leave Selfhood now in her fond sanctuary awhile  
with the unseen universe communing and entranced  
strangely:—As when a high moon thru' the rifted wrack  
gleameth upon the random of the windswept night;  
or as a sunbeam softly, on early worshippers  
at some rich shrine kneeling, stealeth thru' the eastern apse  
and on the clouded incense and the fresco'd walls 170

## II

mantleth the hush of prayer with a vaster silence,  
laden as 'twere with the unheard music of the spheres;  
—nay, incommunicable and beyond all compare  
are the rich influences of those moments of bliss,  
mocking imagination or pictured remembrance,  
as a divine dream in the vaulted slumber of life.

Leave we Selfhood now secretly under thatt nimbus,  
fashioning by nurtur in a new selfhood of spirit  
whatever in the redemption of beauty and dignity  
ennobleth the society or the person of man—  
leave thatt nursery awhile, and ask how Nature wrought  
where she with-held from life the gift of Motherhood.

180

The teeming progeny of such egg-breeding insects  
as multiply their children a thousandfold a day  
must lie close on the zero of parental bondage;  
nor can they be debarr'd by ignominy of rank  
or unlikeness of kind from vouching in this case:  
For among Bees and Ants are social systems found  
so complex and well-order'd as to invite offhand  
a pleasant fable enough: that once upon a time,  
or ever a man was born to rob their honeypots,  
bees wer fully endow'd with Reason and only lost it  
by ordering so their life as to dispense with it;  
whereby it pined away and perish'd of disuse,

190

## II

which, whether it wer or no, if men can judge of Bees,  
well might be in their strange manner of life—so like it is  
with what our economical bee-minded men  
teach as the first intelligential principle  
of human government welfare and happiness;—

Nay, some I have seen wil choose a beehive for their sign 200  
and gloss their soul-delusion with a muddled thought,  
picturing a skep of straw, the beekeeper's device,  
a millowner's workshop, for totem of their tribe;  
Not knowing the high goal of our great endeavour  
is spiritual attainment, individual worth,  
at all cost to be sought and at all cost pursued,  
to be won at all cost and at all cost assured;  
not such material ease as might be attain'd for all  
by cheap production and distribution of common needs,  
wer all life level'd down to where the lowest can reach: 210

Thus generating for ever in his crowded treadmills,  
man's life wer cheap as bees'; and we may see in them  
how he likewise might liv, if each would undertake  
the maximum of toil that is found tolerable  
upon a day-doled minimum of sustenance;  
and stay from procrëation at thatt just number of men,  
hard-workers and small-eaters, who coud crowd on earth  
under the shadow of this skeleton of happiness.  
And since life must lose value in diminution of goods,  
life-time must also itself be in due proportion abredged; 220

## II

and both diminishings must at some point be stay'd,  
lest by slow loss they come dwindling in the end to nought:  
then, when to each single life the allotted span is fix'd,  
the system will be at balance, stable and perfected.

The ground-root folly of this pitous philanthropy  
is thinking to distribute indivisibles,  
and make equality in things incommensurable:  
forged under such delusions, all Utopias  
are castles in the air or counsels of despair.  
So Plato, on whose infant lips—as it is told— 230  
bees settled where he lay slumbering in his cradle,  
and honour'd with their augury man's loan of praise—  
ev'n Plato, when he in fear and mistrust of Selfhood  
denyeth family life to his republicans,  
fell, bruized; tho' cautiously depicting Socrates  
reluctant to disclose the offensiv absurdum  
of his pretentious premiss—when, being forced to admit  
that in his free community of women and children  
no child would ken its parent, no parent his child,  
he sought to twist the bull's horns with a sophistry— 240  
arguing that mother's love and home-life being the source  
of such inestimable good, 'twere wise that law  
should forbid privat property in their benefits:  
Nay, so 'twould set his state above all other states,  
wer suchlike indispensable privileges

## II

rescued from ownership, and for the general use distributed equally among the citizens.

For surely (said he) a bastard nursed in a bureau must love and reverence all women for its mothers; and likewise every woman, being in like default, would love all babies as her only son. May-be Plato was pleased to launch his whole Utopia safely in absolute dreamland; but poor Socrates, on whom he father'd it, was left *in nubibus* where Aristophanes in good jest had set him some twenty years afore: and our sophists, who lack claim to any shred of great Plato's glorious mantle of wisdom, hav secured a good lien on his bluff.

250

But yet to read the strange riddle of the hiving bees, their altruism and platonesque intelligence, 'tis enough to suppose that their small separat selves are function'd by the same organic socialism and vital telepathy as the corpuscles are whereof their little bodies are themselves composed: that this cell-habit, spredd thru'out to a general sense, inspireth them in their corporat community.

260

Consider the tiny egg-cell whence the man groweth, how it proliferateth freely, as a queen-bee doth, and more surely than any animal or plant breedeth; how each new offspring cell is for some special work

270

## II

differentiated and functioneth spontaneously,  
and ev'n wil change its predetermin'd faculty  
when accidental environment maketh a call,  
leaving its proper sphere to amend what hath gone wrong:  
Consider then their task, those unimaginable  
infinite co-adaptations of function'd tissue  
correlated delicately in a ravel'd web  
of unknown sensibilities . . how 'tis a task  
incomparable in complexity with whatsoe'er  
the bees can boast: nor do the unshapely cells behave 280  
with lesser show of will, nor of purpose and skill:  
Pass by the rarer achievements, yea, forget all fames,  
all works all art all virtue and knowledge—set them by,  
and still the solved problems must exhaust our wonder;  
Reason can bring no more; and it addeth nothing  
that the complete insect should in some part possess  
some of the faculties of its constituent cells.  
Or if this thing be deem'd in Natur anomalous,  
that perfect organisms with sense and motion endow'd  
should still behave to each other as link'd constructiv cells, 290  
yet outwardly to our eyes this freedom affordeth  
machinery wherupon common purpose can work:  
To the insect, order and disorder are exposed to sight;  
and so we think to see the little emmets confer  
and locking their antennæ immediatly transmit  
the instinctiv calls which each and all can feel; whereas

## II

the mutual fellowship of distributed cells  
hath so confounded thought that explanation is fetch'd  
from chemic agency: because in that science  
the reaction of unknown forces is described and summ'd 300  
in mathematic formulæ pregnant of truth,  
and of such universal scope that, being call'd laws,  
their mere description passeth for Efficient Cause.

Sometimes when slowly from the deep sleep of fatigue  
a man awakeneth, he lyeth for awhile amazed,  
aware of self and of his rested body, and yet  
knowing not where he is, bewilder'd, unable  
to interpret sight or sound, because the slumbering guards  
in Memory's Castle hav'agg'd at his summons  
for to let down the drawbridge and to uplift the gate: 310  
Anon with their deliverance he cometh again  
to usual cognisance of the things about him,  
life, and all his old familiar concepts of home.

So 'tis with any Manchild born into the world,  
so wondereth he awhile at the stuff of his home,  
so, tho' slowly and unconsciently, he remembereth.—  
The senses ministrant on his apperception  
are predisposed to the terrestrial influences,  
adapted to the environment where they took shape:  
With ease of long habit his lungs inhale the air, 320



## II

his eyes and skin welcome the sun, and his palate  
findeth assurance taking to the mother's milk:  
His muffling wraps, his frill'd and closely curtain'd cot  
and silken apparel of wealth are stranger things to him  
than the rough contacts wherefrom they are thought to shield him,  
the everlasting companionships of his lang syne;  
nor later wil he meet with any older acquaintance  
than Bees are; for his ancestors ere they wer men  
had pillaged the wild combs, and thru' untold ages  
hive-honey in cave and palace hath sweeten'd man's food: 330  
not all the flooding syrup from the East-Indian cane  
foster'd in the Antilles, Ohio and Illinois,  
in Java, Demerara or Jamaica can drown  
Hybla's renown, nor cheapen the honey of Narbonne:  
A jar of Hymettan from a scholar in Athens  
regaled our English laurel above all gifts to me,  
who hav come to wiser affection in my regard for bees,  
learning the secret purpose wherefor Nature plann'd  
their industry, and controll'd its fashion to subserve  
the beauty and fertility of her vegetant life, 340  
to enrich her blooms with colour and fructify her fruits,  
—which never a bee can guess, nor that the unwholesomeness  
of mixy pollen (a thing that so concerneth bees)  
was by the flowers contrived for their own benefit:—  
Nay, whether it be in the gay apple-orchards of May,  
when the pink bunches spread their gold hearts to the sun,

## II

nor yet rude winds hav snow'd their petals to the ground;  
 or when a dizzy bourdon haunteth the sweet cymes  
 that droop at Lammas-tide the queenly foliage  
 of a tall linden tree, where yearly by the wall 350  
 of some long-ruin'd Abbey she remembereth her  
 of glad thanksgivings and the gay choral Sabbaths,  
 while in her leafy tower the languorous murmur  
 floateth off heav'nward in a mellow dome of shade;—  
 or when, tho' *summer hath o'erbrim'd their clammy cells*  
 the shorten'd days are shadow'd with dark fears of dearth,  
 bees ply the more, issuing on sultry noons to throng  
 in the ivy-blooms—what time October's flaming hues  
 surcharge the brooding hours, till passionat soul and sense  
 blend in a rich reverie with the dying year;— 360  
 when and wherever bees are busy, it is the flowers  
 dispense their daily task and determin its field;  
 the prime motiv, may-hap, of all bee-energy,  
 as of bee-industry they are surely the whole stuff.  
 Unwitting tho' it is, this great labor of love  
 in such kindly intimacy with nature's workings  
 hath a genial beauty, the charm whereof lacketh  
 to the hireling drudgery of our huge city hives.  
 So for their happy demeanour and sweet ministry  
 they wer ever admired of man, and won immortal place 370  
 in divine story and in poetic fable and rhyme:  
 Deem'd heav'nly visitants wer they, children of the air

## II

of no earthly engendering, under celestial laws  
living a life of wisdom pleasur and diligence,  
a model for the polity and society of men.

Alas, we hav seen too near the poor life of the Bee,  
how of the swarming workers that cluster'd to found  
the springtide colony and project its waxen walls  
not one liveth to sing her *nisi Dominus*,  
nor to rest from her labour, nor to enjoy the fruits. 380  
Forty days, six unsabbath'd weeks of fever'd toil,  
wasteth and wearith out their little frames—in truth  
their eggs wer a mass-product, not design'd to endure,  
nor for themselves, but pennywise to serve a turn:—  
One by one they succumb on their lonely journeys,  
o'erladen above their strength, benighted or astray,  
entrapp'd by swooping beaks, or by hard hail laid low  
with broken wings, untill a frail remnant at last  
wearily welcoming the dim prescience of death  
seek their own cemetery, where their shriveling skins 390  
may lie together apart nor soil the hive; yet stil  
ever and ever as they fail, perish and disappear,  
new shifts of younger workers, born of later eggs,  
take-up the unresting labour, each in their turn content  
to keep hive clean, eggs plenty, and storeroom full.  
Thus passeth summer, and with her draggled pageantry  
they too giv o'er, and stay all business in the hive,

## II

and huddling upon the foodstore in their dark den  
by numb stagnation husband the low flicker of life,  
sustain'd by an unheard promise that their prison again 400  
shall feel the sun, and they with the brave buds of March  
shall drink the valiance of his steepening rays, they too  
be hearten'd to revive, and venturing forth renew  
the well-worn round of toil; wherein ther is no one point  
of true accomplishment, since the sweet honeycomb  
for which man thanketh them, is but their furnishment,  
the larder and nursery and provisional shelter  
wherein their forlorn hope, their last shift may hold out  
thru' the long sleepless night of winter's starving gloom.

And for their monarch Queen—an egg-casting machine, 410  
helpless without attendance as a farmer's drill,  
by bedels driven and gear'd and in the furrows steer'd,  
well-watch'd the while, and treated with respect and care  
so long as she run well, oil'd stoked and kept in trim;  
but if deranged she slacken in her depositing,  
she is dealt with as men scrap a worn-out seed-barrow,  
not worth the mending; new machines cost nought to bees.

Now when this story is with man's tender sentiment  
foolishly travestied, Nature wil seem malign:  
But bees—unless the Selfhood of the hive can feel— 420  
lack conscience of emotion, or hav no more than when,  
call'd by the sun to swarm in a bright morn of May,

## II

their agitated clamour and frolic flight would shew  
that some levity hath prick'd their cores: even as with us  
who feel the exhilaration of the voluptuous air  
that surgeth in our flesh to flood the soul, and ease  
our stiff behaviour; and to such happy influences  
swarming bees are responsiv and forget to sting:  
in which, as in their stranger mockeries of mankind,  
they are truly less like us than we are like to them.

430

So all barbaric tyrants, who secure their throne  
by murder of rivals, hav their model in the Queen-bee;  
and the class-bate that kindleth in disorder'd times,  
when prosperity hath set envy and desire at war—  
'tis like the workers' annual massacre of the Drones:  
And even if some faint rebel mote of pleasure lurk  
in these fly-puppetries of human crime, 'tis plain  
that bees in their short life can hav so little joy  
and so much toil,—I say 'tis plain, that (if the things  
be comparable) then with the beehive compared  
the New-world slave-plantations wer abodes of bliss.

440

Me-seemeth in my poem these poor hive-bees fare  
as with an old black bear that hath climb'd on their tree  
in the American Adirondacks or Asian  
Himalya, and clawing their comb, eateth it in,  
grubs, bees and honey and all: it is all one to him,  
for the brute is omnivorous and hath a sweet tooth.

## II

Conscient Reason, the channel of man's spiritual joy  
hath such dominant function also in bodily feeling  
that 'tis the measur of suffering in all animals, 450  
in lower forms negligible, and in the lowest  
pain can be felt no more than mid the dancing waves  
a pleasure-boat feeleth the hand on her tiller  
that keepeth-up her head to th' wind and her sails full.  
And of spiritual pain the most cometh again  
thru' Reason, whether of frailty or of imperfection:—  
Savagery hath the throes; and ah! in tender years  
the mind of childhood knoweth torments of terror,  
fears incommunicable, unconsolable,  
vague shapes; tho' oft they be the dread boding of truth, 460  
against which man's full Reason at grips may wrestle in vain.  
Yet for the gift of his virgin intelligence  
a child is ever our nearest pictur of happiness:  
'tis a delight to look on him in tireless play  
attentivly occupied with a world of wonders,  
so rich in toys and playthings that naked Nature  
wer enough without the marvellous inventory of man;  
wherewith he toyleth no less, and learning soon the lore  
of cypher and alphabet anon getteth to con  
the fair scholarly comment that science hath penn'd 470  
glossing the mazy hieroglyph of Nature's book;  
and as he ever drinketh of the living waters

## II

his spirit is drawn into the stream and, as a drop  
 commingled therewith, taketh of birthright therein  
 as vast an heritage as his young body hath  
 in the immemorial riches of mortality.

And now full light of heart he hath willingly pass'd out  
 thru' the sword-gates of Eden into the world beyond:  
 He wil be child no more: in his revel of knowledge  
 all the world is his own: all the hope of mankind 480  
 is sharpen'd to a spearpoint in his bright confidence,  
 as he rideth forth to do battle, a Chevalier  
 in the joyous travail of the everlasting dawn:  
 Ther is nought to compare then, truly nought to compare:  
 and wer not Fortune fickle in her lovingkindness,  
 all wer well with a man—for his life is at flower,  
 nor hath he any fear: πόθεν θανάτου νῦν  
 μνημονεύσειεν ἄν ἐν ἀκμῇ τοσαύτῃ?

But since her favor is inscrutable and uncertain,  
 and of her multiplicity she troubleth not 490  
 at the interaction of diverse self-consequences,  
 ther wil be blastings and blightings of hope and love,  
 and rude shocks that affray; yet to the enamour'd soul  
 evil is irrelevant and wil be brush'd aside:  
 rather 'tis as with Art, wherein special beauty  
 springeth of obstacles that hav been overcome  
 and to graces transform'd; so too the lover in life  
 wil make obstructions serve, and from all resistance

## II

gain strength: his reconciliation with suffering is eased  
by fellow-suffering, and in pride of his calling  
good warriorship welcometh the challenge of death.

500

Beneath the spaceless dome of the soul's firmament  
he liveth in the glow of a celestial fire,  
fed by whose timeless beams our small obedient sun  
is as a cast-off satellite, that borroweth  
from the great Mover of all; and in the light of light  
man's little works, strewn on the sands of time, sparkle  
like cut jewels in the beatitude of God's countenance.

But heav'nward tho' the chariot be already mounted,  
'tis Faith alone can keep the charioteer in heart—

510

Nay, be he but irresolute the steeds wil rebel,  
and if he looketh earthward they wil follow his gaze;  
and ever as to earth he neareth, and vision cleareth  
of all that he feareth, and the enemy appeareth  
waving triumphant banners on the strongholds of ill,  
his mirroring mind wil tarnish, and mortal despair  
possess his soul: then surely Nature hath no night  
dark as thatt black darkness that can be felt: no storm  
blind as the fury of Man's self-destructiv passions,  
no pestilence so poisonous as his hideous sins.

520

Thus men in slavery of sorrow imagin ghastly creeds,  
monstrous devilry, abstractions of terror, and wil *look*  
*to death's benumbing opium as their only cure,*  
or, seeking proudly to ennoble melancholy



## II

by embracement, wil make a last wisdom of woe:  
*They lie in Hell like sheep, death gnaweth upon them;*  
whose prophet sage and preacher is the old Ecclesiast  
pseudo-Solomon, who cryeth in the wilderness,  
calling all to baptism in the Slough of Despond:  
VANITAS VANITATUM, OMNIA VANITAS.

530

THE Spartan General BRASIDAS, the strenuous man,  
who earn'd historic favour from his conquer'd foe,  
once caught a mouse foraging in his messbasket  
among the figs, but when it bit him let it go,  
praising its show of fight in words that Plutarch judged  
worth treasuring; and since I redd the story at school  
unto this hour I hav never thought of Brasidas  
and cannot hear his name, but that I straightway see  
a table and an arm'd man smiling with hand outstretch'd  
above a little mouse that is scampering away.

540

Why should this thing so hold me? and why do I welcome now  
the tiny beast, that hath come running up to me  
as if here in my cantos he had spied a crevice,  
and counting on my friendship would make it his home?

'Tis such a pictur as must by mere beauty of fitness  
convince natural feeling with added comfort.  
The soldier seeth the instinct of Selfhood in the mouse  
to be the same impulse that maketh virtue in him.

## II

For Brasidas held that courage ennobleth man,  
and from unworth redeemeth, and that folk who shrink 550  
from ventur of battle in self-defence are thereby doom'd  
to slavery and extinction: and so this mouse, albeit  
its little teeth had done him a petty hurt, deserved  
liberty for its courage, and found grace in man.

I had disliked Brasidas if he had kill'd the mouse:  
needless taking of life putteth Reason to shame,  
and men so startle at bloodshed that all homicide  
may to a purist seem mortal pollution of soul;  
a mystical horror of it may rule in him so strong,  
that rather than be slayer he would himself be slain: 560  
But fatherhood dispenseth with this vain taboo:  
the duty of mightiness is to protect the weak:  
and since slackness in duty is unto noble minds  
a greater shame and blame than any chance offence  
ensuing on right conduct, this hath my assent,—  
that where ther is any savagery ther will be war:  
the warrior therefore needeth no apology.

CHILDREN, for all their innocency and gentleness,  
in their unreason'd Selfhood think no scorn of war,  
but practise mimicry of it in their merry games, 570  
like puppies that would learn their fighting tricks betimes;  
and a Duke's well-bred cubs win romantic escape  
from their palatial mansion, hiding in the woods  
where they may scream and weave their raw wigwams, and don

## II

the feathery tinsel and warpaint of the Cherokees.

My little chorister, who never miss'd a note,—  
 I mark'd him how when prayers wer ended he would take  
 his Bible, and in his corner ensconced would sit and read  
 with unassumed devotion. What was it fetch'd him?  
 Matthew Mark Luke and John was it? The parables, 580  
 the poetry and passion of Christ? Nay 'twas the bloody books  
 of Jewish war, the story of their Judges and Kings;  
 lured by those braggart annals, while he conn'd the page  
 the parson's mild discourse pass'd o'er his head unheard.  
 For Coverdale in his grand English truly built  
 a temple fair as thatt Ionic fane, wherein  
 neath his nine-column'd portico of all history  
 Herodotus sitteth statued; and like the Jew  
 the naive Greek chronicler discovereth God's purpose 590  
 guiding his chosen race to terrestrial glory.  
 Nor hath any other nation any better argument,  
 whether it be forged or filch'd, invented or stolen;  
 and their historians all are as children in this,  
 and eagerly from battlefield to battlefield  
 jaunt on their prancing pens after their man of war,  
 who carveth the Earth into new kingdoms, as a cake  
 is sliced for grabbing school-boys at a teaparty:  
 and in their exaltation of dread and derringdo,  
 prowess is magnified and cruelty condoned;  
 whence smaller nations, as the Portuguese, require 600

## II

to multiply tenfold the tale of combatants,  
ere they deem any event worthy of their pictured pride.  
Parisian vanity reposeth thus today  
on Buonaparte's fame; for Alexander and he  
are kings of kings and lords of lords, the conquerors  
of conquerors all; dwarfing rude rivals whenso'er,  
Alaric, Tamurlane, Attila and Zingis Khan,  
once names of terror and furious bombast, foremost men  
humbled, as wer the seventy kings who with their thumbs  
and their great toes cut off, finger'd the crumbs beneath  
Adonibezek's table, untill Jew Simeon came  
and did the same by him to my chorister's joy.

610

And since all earthly EMPIRE hath taken origin  
from bloody invasion, man for himself would fashion  
his sanction and exemplar in the kingdom of heav'n;  
Thus hundred-handed giants, swarming from chaos  
to exalt the glory of Zeus, barricaded his throne,  
uprooting mountains in titanic rebellion.  
So hath the Church utter'd like false moneys for Christ  
with Godhead's image stamp'd, and pass'd it on the folk  
who, shadow'd in the murk of vulgar vainglories,  
wil prick their ears to hear how "Ther was war in Heav'n,  
and Michael and his Angels (like knights of romance)  
fought with the Dragon": tho' Almighty hath nought to gain,  
and by sovran oppression exalteth only his foe

620

## II

in tragic sympathy, as with Milton's great devil,  
against infinit odds confronting undismay'd  
inevitable ruin; or old Methusalah  
who when the flood rose higher swam from peak to peak  
til, with the last wild beasts tamed in their fear, he sat 630  
watching the whelm of water on topmost Everest,  
as thatt too was submerged; while in his crowded ark  
Noah rode safely by: and sailors caught by storm  
on the wide Indian Ocean at shift of the monsoon,  
hav seen in the dark night a giant swimmer's head  
that on the sequent billows trailing silvery hair  
at every lightning flash reappeareth in place,  
out-riding the tempest, as a weather-bound barque  
anchor'd in open roadstead lifteth at the seas.

And POETRY in her task of adorning spirit, 640  
trustful also and faithful to the instincts of man,  
honoureth ever the steeds above the charioteer.  
She once would favour Selfhood, but 'tis now the foal;  
and learning sapphic languor in the labour of love,  
the Muse hath doff'd her armour for a silken robe:  
yet in her swooning luxury she hath never match'd  
nor dethroned bearded Homer's great epic of war;  
altho' thatt siege of Troy was in the beginning  
wrath and concupiscence, and in the end thereof  
tragedy so tearful that no mind can approve, 650

## II

nor any gentle heart take comfort in the event.

But these and all old tales of far-off things, bygones  
of long-ago whereof memory still holdeth shape,  
Time and the Muse hav purged of their unhappiness;  
with their bright broken beauty they pervade the abyss,  
peopling the Solitude with gorgeous presences:  
as those bare lofty columns, time-whiten'd relics  
of Atlantëan adoration, upstanding lone  
in Baalbec or Palmyra, proudly affront the waste  
and with rich thought atone the melancholy of doom.

660

Yet since of all, whatever hath once been, evil or good,  
tho' we can think not of it and remember it not,  
nothing can wholly perish; so ther is no birthright  
so noble or stock so clean, but it transmitteth dregs,  
contamination at core of old brutality;  
inchoate lobes, dumb shapes of ancient terror abide:  
tho' fading still in the ocëanic deeps of mind  
their eyeless sorrows haunt the unfathom'd density,  
dulling the crystal lens of prophetic vision,  
crippling the nerve that ministereth to trembling strength,  
distorting the features of our nobility:

670

And we, living at prime, what is it now to us  
how our forefathers dream'd, suffer'd, struggled, or wrought?  
how thru' the obliterated æons of man's ordeal  
unnumber'd personalities separatly endured?  
Think not to explore, estimate and accumulate

## II

those infinit dark happenings into a single view  
that might affect feeling with true judgment of thought:  
Imagination, that would set science that task,  
is as the astronomer who, with peduncled eye 680  
screw'd here or there at some minutest angle-space  
of the wide heav'ns, thinketh by piecemeal reckoning  
to pictur and comprehend the illimitable worlds  
thronging eternity; his highest fantasy  
is like an athlete's dream that he hath lept off the globe,  
when all his waking power is to jump-up and fall  
the height of his own head—all that the best can do.

Wer it not then well to enquire of Reason, ere we admit  
her condemnation of War, seeing it so firmly entrench'd  
in the immemorial practice and good favour of man, 690  
whence hath she fetch'd her high authority, her right  
of spiritual judgment? WHENCE THEN COMETH WISDOM?

But I was anger'd with myself to hav said this thing,  
seeing that my thought had wander'd; for Reason reply'd  
"This question is wrongly ask'd. Who is it that putteth  
"this question into my mouth, and biddeth me answer him?—  
"I who hav never doubted of my authority,  
"who am the consciousness of things judging themselves—  
"Hav I not learn'd that Selfhood is fundamental  
"and universal in all individual Being; 700

## II

“and that thru’ Motherhood it came in animals  
“to altruistic feeling, and thence-after in men  
“rose to spiritual affection? What then am I  
“in my conscience of self but very consciousness  
“of spiritual affection upgrown to life in me?  
“Truly inscrutable and dark is the Wisdom of God,  
“but no man cometh into WISDOM but by me.”

Then was I shamed: but still my thought went harking back  
on its old trail, whence Reason learn’d its troublous task  
to comprehend aright and wisely harmonise  
the speechless intuitions of the inconscient mind;  
which, tho’ a naked babe (as men best pictured Christ)  
is yet in some sort nearer to the Omniscient  
than man’s unperfect Reason, baulk’d as thatt must be  
by the self-puzzledom of introspection and doubt.  
Thatt dark mind with its potency is the stuff of life,  
nature’s immutable provision: in some maybe,  
stagnant and poor, in some activ and rich, in each  
a given unique quantum of personality,  
a loan of so-much (as ’tis writ *to one he gave  
five talents, to another two and to another one*);  
a treasure that can be to good fortune assured  
by Reason, its determinant and inexplicable  
coefficient, that varieth also in power and worth.

For I think not of Reason as men thought of Adam,  
created fullgrown, perfect in the image of God;



## II

but as a helpless nursling of animal mind,  
as a boy with his mother, unto whom he oweth  
more than he ever kenneth or stayeth to think, language,  
knowledge, grace, love and those ideal aims whereby 730  
his manly intelligence cometh to walk alone.

But how, in this independence and pride, I ask,  
how can this younger born stand off so far apart,  
clear of all else, that by the mere conscience of things  
he can be judge of all and of himself to boot?  
For that I find him oftentimes servant and drudge:  
as 'tis seen in the true hermeneutic of ART,  
whereof all excellence upspringeth of itself,  
like a rare fruit upon some gifted stock, ripening  
on its arch-personality of inborn faculty, 740  
without which gift creativ Reason is barren; altho'  
it will collaborate actively and eagerly  
with various governance, which appeareth in some  
as happy selection and delighted approval  
of spiritual nativities, that teem i' the mind,  
surging to escape, like to wild bubbles in a pot  
when the red fire beneath bristleth, and tortureth  
the water to airy ebullience;—or in another  
as toilsom evolution of larval germs, which yet  
transform while confidently it laböreth thereat 750  
slowly as a modeller in clay. How in its naked self  
Reason wer powerless showeth when philosophers

## II

wil treat of Art, the which they are full ready to do,  
having good intuition that their master-key  
may lie therein: but since they must lack vision of Art  
(for otherwise they had been artists, not philosophers)  
they miss the way; and ev'n the Greeks themselves, supreme  
in making as in thinking, never of their own art  
found the true hermeneutick; and the first insight  
of the twin-gifted Plato was to Aristotle 760  
a crude offence; for Plato said that earthly things,  
whether material objects or abstract notions,  
wer shadows of Ideas laid up in God's house,  
—a dainty dish for the sophistic banqueters.  
And yet this delicat doctrin, that held no shield  
to Zeno's lancing logic, took not hurt at heart  
from any mortal assault, but liveth in the schools  
with flourish'd head serene, high and invulnerable;—  
because the absurdity of indefinable forms  
is less than the denial of existence to thought: 770  
and truly if all existence is expression of Mind,  
ideas must themselves be truer existences  
than whatever else, and in such thought their nearest name.

Powers unseen and unknown are the fountains of life:  
no animal but kenneth that sunlight is warm;  
no dog but shifteth posture with the shifting shade  
reasonably as we: but man maketh a dial for it

## II

to measur his day, and by his abstract intellect  
hath taken it for the source and very cause of life  
then by science unraveling its physical rays 780  
he hath separated some, and found some properties;  
but of the whole he knoweth that this analysis  
hath not approach'd the secret of their living power.  
Nor hath man ever a doubt that mere objects of sense  
affect his mental states, nor that the mind in turn  
promoteth the action and function of his animal life  
in its organs and bones. The Greek astronomer,  
gazing with naked eye into the starry night,  
forgot his science and, in transport of spirit,  
his mortal lot. Then seem'd it to him as if his feet 790  
touch'd earth no longer: ἀλλὰ παρ' αὐτῷ Ζανί,  
said he, in the treasur'd words that keep his joy from death,  
θεοτρεφῆος τίμπλαμαι ἀμβροσίης.

Now this imagination of awe and ecstasy,  
being proper and common in Man, and where lacking or dull  
so ready to suggestion, it seemeth as tho' the eye  
had some spiritual vision—as if the idea of Space  
and also of God existed in the midnight skies;  
and thus men came to think that their corporeal sense  
encounter'd reality in the appearance of things; 800  
and, stirr'd by influences that outreaching Reason  
kindled unknown desires, their awed souls fell to prayer  
that the great Maker of All would reveal his Being.

## II

If so be then that Reason, our teacher in all the schools,  
owneth to existences beyond its grasp, whereon  
its richer faculties depend, and that those powers  
are ever present influencing the unconscious mind  
in its native function to inspire the Will, 'twould seem  
that as the waken'd mind fashion'd to'ard intellect  
so the dark workings of his animal instincts  
faced in a new perspectiv to'ard spiritual sight;  
and thus man's trouble came of their divergency.  
For spiritual perception vague and uncontroll'd  
being independent of the abstract intelligence,  
he is disconcerted twixt their rival promises,  
and, doubtful of his road, he wavereth following  
now one now the other: and thus I stand where I conclude  
that man's true wisdom were a reason'd harmony  
and correlation of these divergent faculties:  
this wer the bridge which all men who can see the abyss  
hav reasonably and instinctivly desired to build;  
and all their sacraments and mysteries whatso'er  
attempt to build it; from devout Pythagoras  
to th' last psychologist of Nancy or of Vienna.

810

820

And between spiritual emotion and sensuous form  
the same living compact maketh our Art, wherein  
material appearances engage the soul's depth;  
and if in men untrain'd without habit of thought  
the ear is more æsthetic than the eye is, this cometh

## II

from thatt sense being the earlier endow'd in animals  
who, tho' they be all vacant in a picture-gallery  
nor see themselves in a mirror, attend to music  
and yield to fascination or vague wonder thereat.  
So if we, changing Plato's old difficult term,  
should rename his Ideas Influences, ther is none  
would miss his meaning nor, by nebulous logic,  
wish to refute his doctrin that indeed ther are  
eternal Essences that exist in themselves,  
supreme efficient causes of the thoughts of men.

830

*What is Beauty? saith my sufferings then.*—I answer  
the lover and poet in my loose alexandrines:  
Beauty is the highest of all these occult influences,  
the quality of appearances that thru' the sense  
wakeneth spiritual emotion in the mind of man:  
And Art, as it createth new forms of beauty,  
awakeneth new ideas that advance the spirit  
in the life of Reason to the wisdom of God.  
But highest Art must be rare as nativ faculty is,  
and her surprise of magic winneth favor of men  
more than her inspiration: most are led away  
by fairseeming pretences, which being wrought for gain  
pursue the ephemeral fashion that assureth it;  
and their thin influences are of the same low grade

840

850

## II

as the unaccomplish'd forms; their poverty is exposed  
when they would stake their charm on ethic excellence;  
for then weak simulations of virtues appear,  
such as convention approveth, but not Virtue itself,  
tho' not void of all good: and (as I read) 'twas this  
that Benvenuto intended, saying that not only  
Virtue was memorable but things so truly done  
that they wer like to Virtue; and thus prefaced his book,  
thinking to justify both himself and his works.

860

The authority of Reason therefor relieth at last  
hereon—that her discernment of spiritual things,  
the ideas of Beauty, is her conscience of instinct  
upgrown in her (as she unto conscience of all  
upgrew from lower to higher) to conscience of Beauty  
judging itself by its own beauteous judgment.

And of War she would say: it ranketh with those things  
that are like unto virtue, but not virtue itself:  
rather, in the conscience of spiritual beauty, a vice  
that needeth expert horsemanship to curb, yet being  
nativ in the sinew of selfhood, the life of things,  
the pride of animals, and virtue of savagery,  
so long as men be savage such it remaineth;  
and mid the smoke and gas of its new armoury  
still, with its tatter'd colours and gilt swords of state,  
retaineth its old glory untarnish'd—heroism,  
self-sacrifice, disciplin, and those hardy virtues

870

## II

of courage honour'd in Brasidas, without which  
man's personality wer meaner than the brutes.

880

Who hath not known this pictur?—on a hot afternoon  
of our high summer in August at the country-seat  
of some vext politician, if in their flashing cars  
the county-folk gather to his holiday garden,  
where for their entertainment he hath outspread the lawns  
with tents and furnish'd tables, flags and tennis-nets,—  
if haply he hav set up to dignify his grounds  
a classic statue of marble, fetch'd by ship from Greece.  
that standeth there in true ideal nakedness  
mid parasols and silks, how with blank shadow'd eyes  
it looketh off from all those aimless idlers there  
that flaunt around, now and again blurting perchance  
a shamefast shallow tribute to its beauteous presence!  
—'tis very like among common concourse of men,  
who twixt care of comfort and zeal in worldly affairs  
hav proved serving two masters the vanity of both,  
when a true soldier appeareth, one compact at heart  
of sterner virtues and modesty of maintenance,  
mute witness and martyr of spiritual faith, a man  
ready at call to render his life to keep his soul.

890

900

All *virtue is in her shape so lovely*, that at sight  
her lover is enamour'd even of her nativ face.  
And here I part from Aristotle, agreeing else

## II

that a good disposition is Goddes happiest gift,  
without which, as he addeth, Virtue is unteachable,  
but in minds well-disposed may be by Reason upbuilt:  
“no man cometh (said she) unto WISDOM but by me”;  
But when he would exalt this guiding principle  
to be thatt part whereby we are in likeness with God, 910  
whose Being (saith he) lieth in the unbroken exercise  
of absolute intellect—which for their happiness  
mankind should strive to attain—I halt thereat: and this  
marreth my full accord where, in a famous text  
he hath made Desire to be the Prime Mover of all:  
because the arch-thinker’s heav’n cannot move my desire,  
nor doth his pensiv Deity make call on my love.  
I see the emotion of saints, lovers and poets all  
to be the kindling of some Personality  
by an eternizing passion; and that God’s worshipper 920  
looking on any beauty falleth straightway in love;  
and thatt love is a fire in whose devouring flames  
all earthly ills are consumed, and at least flash of it,  
be it only a faint radiancy, the freed soul glimpseth,  
nay ev’n may think to hav felt, some initiat foretaste  
of thatt mystic rapture, the consummation of which  
is the absorption of Selfhood in the Being of God.

Ideas and influences spiritually discern’d



## II

are of their essence pure: but in the lot of man  
nothing is wholly pure; yet all hindrance to good 930  
—be good and evil two in love or one in strife—  
maketh occasion for it, by contrast heightening,  
by challenge and revelly arousing Virtue to act.  
Hence 'twill not be with men only of contention and hate,  
nor only with the ambitious and disorderly  
that combat findeth favor; honest men good and true  
who seek peace and ensue it, seeing war as the field  
for exercise of spirit that else might fust unused,  
embrace the good, and cavil not the inherent terms,  
rather welcoming hardship; which by affraying cowards 940  
purgeth heroic ranks: and battle rallieth all  
keen-hearted sportsmen and the brave gamesters of life,  
adventurers whose joy danceth on peril's edge,  
for whom life hath no relish save in danger of death;  
who love sport for its hazard, and of all their sports  
where hazard is at highest look to find the best  
there on the field where hourly they may stake their all.  
And 'tis because they feel their spirit's ecstasy  
is owing in nought to Reason, but exultantly  
blendeth with the old Selfhood wherefrom it sprang—'tis thus 950  
they can be friendly at heart with nature's heartlessness,  
nor heed the wrongs and cruelties that come and pass,  
overlook'd as by men who hav suffer'd not nor seen.

## II

But we who hav seen, condemn'd in savage self-defence  
to train our peaceful folk in the instruments of death,  
and of massacre and mourning hav suffer'd four years—  
we hav no need to recount in vindication of peace,  
sorrows which no glory of heroism can atone,  
horrors which to forget wer cowardice and wrong,  
dishonesty of heart and repudiation of soul,—  
yet gladly might forget in the passing of pain;  
and memory is so complacent that we well may fear  
lest our children forget;—and see Natur already,  
regardless how her fractious babe had scratch'd her cheek,  
hath with her showy Invincibles retaken amain  
the trenches, and reclothed the devastated lands.

960

See with how placid mien Athena unhelmeted  
rëentering hath possess'd her desolated halls;  
how her musical temples and grave schools are throng'd  
with fresh youth eager as ever with the old books and games,  
their live abounding mirth rëechoing from the walls,  
where among antique monuments their brothers' names  
in long death-roll await the mellowing touch of time.

970

And why not we forget? How is't that we dare not  
wish to forget and cut this canker of memory  
from us, as men diseased in one part of their flesh  
find health in mutilation: as if our agony  
wer a boon to keep, when in its own happy riddance  
'twould die off in the natural oblivion of things,

and with our follies fade: so, each one for himself 980  
 disbanding his self-share, Reason would dissipate  
 its own delusion, and lay that spectre of our dismay,  
 the accumulation of griefs; to which War hath no right  
 prior or prerogative: miseries lay as thick  
 and horrors worse when Plague invaded the cities,  
 Athens or London, raging with polluted flood  
 in every house, and with revolting torture rack'd  
 the folk to loathsom deaths; nor men kenn'd as they fell,  
 desperately unrepentant to the "scourge of God",  
 how 'twas the crowded foulness of their own bodies 990  
 punish'd them so:—alas then in what plight are we,  
 knowing 'twas mankind's crowded uncleanness of soul  
 that brought our plague! which yet we could not cure nor stay;  
 for Reason had lost control of his hot-temper'd steed  
 and taken himself infection of the wild brute's madness;  
 so when its fire slacken'd and the fierce fight wore out,  
 our fever'd pulse show'd no sober return of health.

Amid the flimsy joy of the uproarious city  
 my spirit on those first jubilant days of armistice  
 was heavier within me, and felt a profounder fear 1000  
 than ever it knew in all the War's darkest dismay.

# THE TESTAMENT OF BEAUTY

## *Book Three*

### B R E E D

**H**AVING told of SELFHOOD, ere now I tell of BREED  
the younger of the two Arch-Instincts of man's nature,  
'twere well here to remember how these pictured steeds  
are Ideas construed by the abstract Intellect.

Whatever abode Philosophy thinketh to build,  
to erect a lofty temple that may shrine her faith,  
crowning the unvisited holiness of the hills,  
or thrust her fair façade amid the noisy dens  
of swarming Industry, to invite the sons of toil,  
all altitude expanse or grandeur of building 10  
subsisteth on foundations buried out of sight,  
which yet the good architect carrieth ever in mind,  
and keepeth the draft by him stored in his folios.  
So herein 'twas laid down what footing Reason plann'd;—  
divining Purpose in Natur, it abstracted first  
her main intentions, and subsumeth under each  
the old animal passions ancillary thereto,  
tho' in Nature's economy the same impulse  
may work to divers ends, as demonstrably is seen  
in the appetite of hunger, which prime in selfhood 20  
promoteth no less all living activities,

### III

so universal that some thinkers would make it  
a corner-stone, and mixing other like fabric  
build thereon confidently, albeit for such deep trust  
unfit, being in itself a thing of no substance.

And truly PLEASUR IN FOOD, common to all animals  
that can feel pleasure, comforting the incessant toil  
of sustenance to enable their blind energies,  
when once it findeth conscience in the Reason of man  
is posited by folly as an end-in-itself; 30  
til by sensuous refinement it usurpeth rank  
beside his intellectual and spiritual joys,—  
a road whereon the brutes already had broken ground  
(trespassing somewhat haply on nature's allotments),  
for a Tyger, when once he hath tasted human flesh,  
in pursuit of his prey is more dangerous to men  
and chooseth daintily among them; like those cannibals  
who yet, for all their courtesy (so travelers tell)  
and Spartan stoicism, gaily devour their kind.

From the terrifying jungle of his haunted childhood 40  
where prehistoric horror stil lurketh untamed,  
man by slow steps withdrew, and from supply of need  
fell to pursuit of pleasur, untill his luxury  
supplanting brutality invented a new shame;  
for with civilization a caste of cooks was bred,  
not specialized in structure—as with bees or ants—

### III

but serviceable of either sex and disciplin'd  
in such cultur'd tradition that the grammar of it  
would stock a library; nor are their banquets spreadd  
to please the palate only; the eye is invited 50  
by dainty disguises and the nostril with scents,  
nay ev'n the ear is fed, and on the gather'd guests  
a trifling music playeth, dispelling all thought,  
that while they fill the belly, the empty mind may float  
lightly in the full moonshine of o'erblown affluence.  
Thus, when in London city a Guild of merchants dine,  
one dinner's cost would ease a whole bye-street of want,  
its broken meats outface Christ's thrifty miracle.

But tho' of its mere sensual smirch the scene be cleansed  
at fashionable tables, where delicat guests 60  
sit and play with their food inattentively, as 'twere  
in their relaxation an accidental relish  
to the intellectual banter and familiar discourse  
of social entertainment—a thing overlook'd  
among the agreeable superfluities of life,  
trifles good in themselves, and no more censurable  
than the fine linen of Ulysses and the brooch  
that Penelope gave him, nor the rangled shroud  
that she wove for his sire, nor any work of price  
that humbly doeth honor unto any temple of God— 70  
yet this amenity of Mammon is to the epicure  
mere disgust, a farrago of incongruous kickshaws,

### III

a hazardous pampering, as barbarously remote  
from pleasure's goal as pothouse cheese and ale.  
For Reason once engaged on the æsthetic of food  
refineth every means, as those painters in oil  
who all their sunless days sat labouring to attain  
a chiaroscuro of full colour—so the epicure;  
nor planneth he his creation with a less regard  
to grandiose composition, in a scheme of morsels  
gradated to provoke and stimulate alike  
digestion and appetite; and each viand married  
with a congenial wine, and each wine in itself  
a sublimation of fancy, a radiant riotous juice,  
and of such priceless rarity as no man can come  
but by luck and genius to possess such bottles.

80

And here the Voluptuary may think his anchor  
hath bitten on truth; for surely nothing in nature  
fulfilleth more various expectancies of sense  
than his wine doth; to the eye luminous as rich gems  
engendering thru' long æons in the bowels of earth;  
to the nostrils reminiscent as subtle odours  
of timorous wind-wavering flowers; to the taste  
beyond all savours ravishing, insatiable,  
yet wholesome as is the incense of forested pines,  
when neath their scorching screens they fume the slumberous air;  
and to the mind exhilarating, expelling care,  
even as those well-toned viols, matured by time, which once,

90

### III

when the Muse visited Italy to prepare  
a voice of beauty for the joy of her children, 100  
wer fashion'd by Amati and Stradivari and still,  
treasured in their mellow shapeliness, fulfil  
the genius of her omnipotent destiny,—  
speaking with incantation of strange magic to charm  
the dreams that yet undreamt lurk in the unfathom'd deep  
of mind, unfeatur'd hopes and loves and dim desires,  
uttermost forms of all things that shall be.

'Tis thus by the live firework of his wine allured  
that the epicure thinketh he hath wherewithal to pave  
thru' palate and gullet a right path for his soul, 110  
each feast as a symphonic poem, preluding  
to melodious Andante Scherzo and final Fugue,—  
a microcosm, as those musical pæans are  
that perish not in the using, but persist  
strengthening their immortality while millions feed  
on their unquenchable loveliness evermore.

In such fine artistry of his putrefying pleasures  
he indulgeth richly his time untill the sad day come  
when he retireth with stomach Emeritus  
to ruminate the best devour'd moments of life; 120  
like any old fox-hunter his good days with the hounds,  
any angler or cricketer, for he too hath follow'd  
his sport to himself, and each good day of sport (and thatt  
the dog knoweth and enjoyeth with his Master as well)



### III

is a thing in itself, whole even as life is one.

This is the supreme ecstasy of the mountaineer,  
to whom the morn is bright, when with his goal in sight,  
some icepeak high i' the heav'ns, he is soul-bounden for it,  
prospecting the uncertain clue of his perilous step

to scale precipices where no foot clomb afore,  
for good or ill success to his last limit of strength;

130

his joy in the doing and his life in his hand

he glorieth in the fortunes of his venturous day;

'mid the high mountain silences, where Poesy

*lieth in dream* and with *the secret strength of things*

*that governs thought* inhabiteth, where man wandereth

into God's presence:—But what heav'nly or earthly Muse

attendeth the epicure? Nay, what man deigneth ear

to his grovelling tale? His gluttony rotteth and stinketh

in the dust-bin of Ethick.—Howso thatt may be,

140

the thing cometh of Self, as War doth; and hereby

'twere well to note how some would derive War from Breed,

tho' sex is but the occasion, when jealousy of love

provoketh Selfhood to anger: indeed Herodotus,

seeking the root-cause of the implacable enmity

'twixt Hellenes and Asiatics to convey his book,

dresseth up a frontispiece of four royal rapes,

of Io and Medea, Europa and Helen of Troy,

playing no doubt upon the flair of his hearers,

who love him stil for his good faith in his fables.

150

### III

YET our distinction is proper and holdeth fast. Now BREED  
is to the race as SELFHOOD to the individual;  
and these two prime Instincts as they differ in purpose  
are independent each from other, and separat  
as are the organic tracts in the animal body  
whereby they function; and tho' Breed is needful alike  
to plants as to animals, yet its apparatus  
is found in animals of a more special kind;  
and since race-propagation might hav been assured  
without differentiation of sex, we are left to guess 160  
nature's intention from its full effects in man:  
and such matter is the first that wil follow hereon.

Remembering my dissension from Spinoza here,  
I think of him, Bruno's pupil, ὑψίπολις  
ἄπολις, in his pride at his bench intently  
shaping his lenses, and how he in thatt irksome toil  
to earn his bread, the while he ponder'd his great book,  
was perfecting the tool that invited science  
to ever minuter anatomy, untill she took skill  
to handle invisibles; and lately upon thatt path 170  
hath divined, in the observed fertilization of plants,  
atomic mechanism with unlimited power  
to vary the offspring in character, by mutual

### III

inexhaustible interchange of transmitted genes;  
a theory on such wide experiment upbuilt  
that the enrichment of species may be assumed to be  
the purpose of natur in the segregation of sex.  
Yet this new knowledge throweth no light on our way  
to a purposeful and wise selfbreeding of mankind  
which, could it be, would then responsibly overrule  
all indiscriminat mating: tho' from such ordeal  
our hybrid wisdom well might shrink: rather we see  
complexity irresoluble in obscurity:

180

So may we stil follow our instinctiv preferences  
unrebuked, and in love of Beauty affirm our faith  
that our happiest espousals are nature's free gift.

And the origin of sex lieth yet in thatt darkness  
where all origins are—since definition of links  
within our causal chain advanceth us no way  
in sensible approachment to the first Cause of all:  
we are happy in our discoveries as a child thinketh  
he is nearer to the Pole-star when he is put to bed:  
yet, tracing backwards in the story of sex, the steps  
of our carpeted staircase are familiar and strong.

190

First among lowest types of life we think to find  
no separation of sex: plants in the next degree  
show differentiation at puberty with some signs  
of mutual approachment: next in higher animals  
an early differentiation, and at puberty

### III

periodic appetite with mutual attraction 200  
sometimes engaging Beauty: then at last in man  
all these same characters promoted and strengthen'd  
to a constant conscient passion, by Reason transform'd  
to'ard altruistic emotion and spiritual love.

Breed then together with Selfhood steppeth in pair,  
for as Self grew thru' Reason from animal rage  
to vice of war and gluttony, but meanwhile uprose  
thru' motherly yearning to a profounder affection,  
so Breed, from like degrading brutality at heart,  
distilleth in the altruism of spiritual love 210  
to be the sublimest passion of humanity,  
with parallel corruption; in its supremacy  
confess'd of all, since all in their degree hav felt  
its divine exaltation and bestial abasement.  
It hath sanctified fools and degraded heroes;  
and tho' the warrior wil lightly leave his lady  
to join in battle (so the weight of the elder horse  
side-wrencheth at the yoke), he wil return to her  
more gladly, and often rue his infidelity.

In higher natures, poetic or mystical, 220  
sense is transfigur'd quite; as once with Dante it was  
who saw the grace of a fair Florentine damsel  
as WISDOM UNCREATE: for it happen'd to him

### III

in thatt awakening miracle of Love at first sight,  
which is to many a man his only miracle,  
his one divine Vision, his one remember'd dream—  
it happ'd to Dante, I say, as with no other man  
in the height of his vision and for his faith therein:  
the starry plenitude of his radiant soul,  
searching for tenement in the bounties of life,  
encounter'd an aspect of spiritual beauty  
at the still hour of dawn which is holier than day:  
as when a rose-bud first untrammeleth the shells  
of her swathing petals and looseneth their embrace,  
so the sunlight may enter to flush the casket  
of her virgin promise, fairer than her full bloom  
shall ever be, ere its glories lie squander'd in death:—  
'Twas of thatt silent meeting his high vision came  
rapturous as any vision ever to poet giv'n;  
since in thatt Sacrament he rebaptized his soul  
and lived thereafter in Love, by the merit of Faith  
toiling to endow the world: and on those feather'd wings  
his mighty poem mounted panting, and lieth now  
with all its earthly tangle by the throne of God.

230

240

So to Lucretius also seeking Order in Chance  
some frenzy of Beauty came, neath which constraint he left  
his atoms in the lurch and fell to worshipping  
Aphroditè, the naked Goddess of man's breed;  
and waving the oriflamme of her divinity

### III

above the march of his slow-trooping argument, 250  
he attributeth to her the creation and being  
of all Beauty soe'er: NEC SINE TE QUICQUAM  
DIAS IN LUMINIS ORAS EXORITUR,  
NEQUE FIT LAETUM NEQUE AMABILE QUICQUAM.

So well did he in his rapture: such is Beauty's power  
physical or spiritual; and if it be the cause  
of spiritual emotion (as hath been said), 'tis plain  
that Beauty wil be engaged in man's love, in so far  
as 'tis a proper and actual attribute of man:  
first, as in animals, of his physical form, 260  
to which, when beauty of soul is added, the addition  
but marketh more specially its human character.

Thus Shakespeare, *in the sessions of sweet silent thought*  
gathering from memory the idealization of love,  
when he launch'd from their dream-sheds those golden sonnets  
that swim like gondolas i' the wake of his drama,  
fashion'd for their ensignry a pregnant axiom,  
and wrote: *From fairest creatures we desire increase*  
*That thereby Beauty's Rose might never die*; wherein  
he asserteth beauty to be of love the one motiv, 270  
and thatt in double meaning of object and cause.

And tho' blind instinct wer full puissant of itself  
for propagation of man, yet the attraction of beauty  
bettereth the species, nor without it coud ther hav been  
effect in spirit; and that the poet guarded this

### III

showeth in his lyric, where of Sylvia 'tis enquired  
*why all the swains commend her*, and he replyeth thereto  
*Holy fair and wise is she*, thus giving to Soul  
first place, thereafter to Body and last of the trine  
Intelligence; and thatt is their right order in Love. 280

And this high beauty of spirit—in the conscience of it,  
in the love of it, and the appearances of it—  
tho' it hav no quarrel with thatt physical beauty  
whereof 'twas born, when once 'tis waken'd in the mind  
needeth no more support of the old animal lure,  
but absolute in its transmitted power and grace  
maketh a new beauty of its own appearances.

Thus oft the full majesty and happiness of love  
is found in lovers whose corporeal presences  
would seem disloyalty to the gay worshippers 290  
of the goddess of grace, nor fit to approach her shrine:  
yet lightly wil Love rate the ridicule of them  
whose passion, subsisting in the flourish of flesh,  
outlasteth not its brief prime, but must fade and fade  
as thatt fadeth, and when it perisheth perish;  
and who themselves—save in the rout of their revel  
they hav perish'd immature—provide tales of despair,  
disease and madness; melancholy tragedies  
of ignobility unredeem'd, to scare mankind.

But love's true passion is of immortal happiness, 300

### III

whereof the Greeks, maybe,—whose later poets told  
of a heav'nly Aphroditè—had some dim prescience  
before man ever arrived at that wisdom thru' Christ,  
and now teacheth to his children as their birthright,—a gift  
whose wealth is amplified by spending, and its charm  
rejuvenated by habit, that dulleth all else:  
nor needeth it for joy to look off from this earth  
and beyond, nor to sit on the schoolbench with them  
who dispute in argument the existence of God;  
being of eternity it overcometh evil  
as any nativ disposition is apt to do,  
but more surely and with its virtue more self-secure  
than the merry or sad heart is, that in laughter or tears  
wil keep unchanged its temper, whatsoe'er befall;  
*so priketh hem Nature in hir corages.*

310

But think not Aphroditè therefor disesteem'd  
for rout of her worshippers, nor sensuous Beauty  
torn from her royal throne, who is herself mother  
of heav'nly Love (so far as in human aspect  
eternal essence can hav mortal parentage),  
our true compass in art as our comfort in faith,  
our daily bread of pleasur;—enough that thus I deem  
of Beauty among Goddes best gifts, and even above  
the pleasur of Virtue accord it honour of men.

320



### III

The allure of bodily beauty is mutual in mankind  
as is the instinct of breed, which tho' it seem i' the male  
more activ, is i' the female more predominant,  
more deeply engaging life, grave and responsible.

Thus while in either sex celibat lives are led  
without impoverishment of intellect or will, 330  
this thing is rare in women, whereas in the man  
virginity may seem a virile energy  
in its angelic liberty, prerequisite  
to the perfection of some high personality.

And here we are driv'n to enquire of Reason how it came  
that bodily beauty is deem'd a feminin attribute,  
since not by science nor æsthetick could we arrive  
at such a judgment. But not triflingly to trench  
on prehistoric problems, 'twil be enough to say 340  
that from the first it may not always hav been so,  
and primacy of beauty may hav once lain with the male,  
in days of pagan savagery, afore men left  
their hunting and took tillage of the fields in hand,  
superseding the women and all their moon-magic,  
to invent a reason'd labor of intensiv culture,  
as now 'tis seen;—whether in remotest orient lands  
whose cockcrow is our curfew, where Chineses swarm  
teasing their narrow plots with hand and hoe, carrying  
their own dung on their heads obsequiously as ants;  
or on our western farms where now machines usurp 350

### III

such manual labor, and hav with their strange forms dethroned  
the heraldry of the seasons, fair emblems of eld  
that seem'd the inalienable imagery of mankinde.

How was Nòvember's melancholy endear'd to me  
in the effigy of plowteams following and recrossing  
patiently the desolat landscape from dawn to dusk,  
as the slow-creeping ripple of their single furrow  
submerged the sodden litter of summer's festival!  
They are fled, those gracious teams; high on the headland now  
squatted, a roaring engin toweth to itself 360  
a beam of bolted shares, that glideth to and fro  
combing the stubbled glebe: and agriculture here,  
blotting out with such daub so rich a pictur of grace,  
hath lost as much of beauty as it hath saved in toil.

Again where reapers, bending to the ripen'd corn,  
were wont to scythe in rank and step with measured stroke,  
a shark-tooth'd chariot rampeth biting a broad way,  
and, jerking its high swindging arms around in the air,  
swoopeth the swath. Yet this queer Pterodactyl is well,  
that in the sinister torpor of the blazing day 370  
clicketeth in heartless mockery of swoon and sweat,  
as 'twere the salamandrine voice of all parch'd things:  
and the dry grasshopper wondering knoweth his God.

Or what man feeleth not a new poetry of toil,  
whenas on frosty evenings neath its clouding smoke  
the engin hath huddled-up its clumsy threshing-coach

### III

against the ricks, wherefrom laborers standing aloft  
toss the sheaves on its tongue; while the grain runneth out,  
and in the whirr of its multitudinous hurry  
it hummeth like the bee, a warm industrious boom 380  
that comforteth the farm, and spreadeth far afield  
with throbbing power; as when in a cathedral awhile  
the great diapason speaketh, and the painted saints  
feel their glass canopies flutter in the heav'nward prayer.

Thus hath man's Reason dealt since he took spade in hand,  
either by wit of the insect or of the engineer:  
and they who hav come to think that in remotest times  
Eve delved and Adam span, can show matriarchy of sorts  
had precedent in natur, ostensibly among birds,  
whose males more gaudily feather'd wil disport their charms 390  
and dance in coquetry to win the admiring hens:  
Verily it well may be that sense of beauty came  
to those primitiv bipeds earlier than to man.

But howso in patriarchal times our code upgrew,  
it hath decretals honour'd in the courts of Love:  
'tis the faith of all poets from the Troubadours  
to Shelley's broken amours, and that the fair Muses  
should hav masculin wooers was Apollo's will  
who favour'd his own sex. But had the god inspired  
poetesses many as poets—coud thatt hav been— 400  
follies had cancel'd out truly in the equation of love,

### III

and steadier fire of passion would hav warm'd the world.  
Today if any lady in her boudoir rhymeth,  
she is drown'd in man's tradition and disguiseth her tone,  
transposing her high music to the lower clef;  
or deemeth thatt the orthodoxy of the sapphic mode,  
because of the two love songs which pedantry hath saved  
of Sappho's complisht artistry, one by mischance,  
in thatt muliebrous dump which gave Catullus pause,  
hath this falsification of her true soprano.

410

But 'twas the deeper voice that robed passion in song,  
with the masculin emotion that glorify'd it:  
and man, finding elation in physical beauty  
and in the passion of sex his chief transport of soul,  
ascribed supremacy of beauty to woman's grace,  
and she to'ardly accepted his idolatry.  
Yet if the passion had been identic in the twain,  
the woman surely had found her like ideal in man;  
but the motifs of Nature that determin life  
are hidden, and with the sexes they are unlike in love.

420

For tho' true loves are mutual and of equal strength  
and their bodily communion is a sacrament—  
like those irrevocable initiations of yore  
whose occult ritual it was profane to disclose—  
and in its uttermost surrender of secrecies  
hallowing brute instinct, symbolizeth approach  
to satisfaction of unattainable desire;

### III

yet in fullest devotion and frankest abandon  
of eager and mutual mating, whether or no she ken,  
the woman's choice hath been by a deeper purpose led, 430  
whereof the mastering revelation awaiteth her  
in the reality of her Motherhood; wherefor,  
that her son may be noble, she wil seek his sire  
where her ideal, howe'er vaguely imagin'd, lieth  
outside her sphere, beyond her—and so thinketh she less  
of thatt for which her mate praiseth and seeketh her,  
and longing evermore for what she most lacketh,  
in her thought of wisdom looketh for higher things,  
and for immortal Roses desireth increase.

How Natur (as Plato saith) teacheth man by beauty, 440  
and by the lure of sense leadeth him ever upward  
to heav'nly things, and how the mere sensible forms  
which first arrest him take-on ever more and more  
spiritual aspect,—yet discard not nor disown  
their sensuous beauty, since thatt is eternal and sure,  
the essence thereof being the reverent joy of life—  
this everywhere is seen and most overtly in Breed  
(too many in truth ther be who find it never elsewhere);  
yet man is slow to see that love's call to woman  
is graver and more solemn than it can be to him, 450  
by reason of her higher function and duty therein,  
and all that past attainment which his spirit hath won

### III

came to him thru' motherhood of the nursling boy;—  
yea, ev'n the dignity of his masculin intellect,  
that outreacheth her range, was first of her making  
and never could have fruited but for the devout  
fostering environment of her lovingkindness:  
nor can man's future attainment forgo that shelter,  
wherewith her precocious girlhood accompanieth  
the evergrowing incumbency of his pupillage, 460  
as it grew in the brutes: . . . and here 'tis seen again  
how 'tis a backsliding and treason against nature  
when women will unsex their own ideal of Love,  
and ignorantly aiming to be in all things as men,  
would make love as men make it—tho' Sappho did that,  
who rare among women for manly mastery of art,  
a Nonsuch of her kind, exceeded by default,  
nondescript, and for lack of the true feminine  
borrow'd effeminacy of men, the incontinent,  
who, ranking with gluttons in Aristotle's book, 470  
made a lascivious pleasure of their Lesbian loves;  
till in the event the euphony of her isle's fair name  
whisper'd an unspoken and else unspeakable shame.

Nor can the ethic that here intrudeth be deny'd,  
since if men speak of morals 'tis of sex they think;  
for why the passion of it both transporteth their souls  
and troubleth daily life with problems of conduct.

### III

Now to the most who are like to read my English poem  
christian marriage wil seem a stablsh'd ordinance  
as universal, wholesome and needful to man 480  
as WHEAT is, which, ubiquitous, and sib to a weed  
that yet wil hamper its cultur, overruleth all else,  
weigheth our gold by single grains, and harvested  
measureth in sacks the peace and welfare of the world,  
our BREAD OF LIFE, and symbol of the food of the soul.

But tho' monogamy had been by wise lawgivers  
coded with rights and duties and property, and thus  
by Jewish use or Roman held place in the Church,  
the instinct of sex was ever anathema to the Essenes  
whose thought handsel'd the faith; 'twas to thatt sect the accurst  
contamination of all spiritual purity: 491  
and only after tough battle against two mighty outbursts  
of Pagan Poetry coud marriage come in the end  
to its own, from being a tolerated discordancy  
to be an accepted harmony, and hallow'd as such  
within the Church, a sacrament. Of those two wars  
the story is long, and now 'tis here briefly to tell.

The first War of the Essenes was with the poetry  
of SELFHOOD, those sagas and epic rhapsodies  
which had burst forth to flood all Europe in the time 500  
of the northern invasions, when the hideous Huns,

### III

extending the right wing of their havoc, swept down  
on the old land of the Goths. Soon as their arrows prick'd  
our Teuton forefathers, a clash of arms and yell  
of battle arose, that in the unsearchable storage  
of earth's high firmament vibrateth to this day.

The warriors, who in vain defence of home escaped  
the first mauling and massacre, wer driven forth  
and, pressing Westward desperatly, became in turn  
themselves ruthless invaders, live firebrands that spredd  
the blast of their contagion to Allemand and Frank,  
Burgundian, Vandal and Lombard, from Angle and Dane  
to furthest Kelt; and with the sword follow'd the song,  
an inextinguishable pæan of battle and blood. 510

A sudden eruption of nature, as when earth quaketh  
and faltering along the edges of its wrinkling shell  
the mountains roar and crack, and vent their ruddy bowels  
in spume of molten lava; as oft hath been where now  
some gracious valley embosom'd in soft azurous hills  
smileth, an Eden as fair as Goddes love was feign'd  
to have planted for man's use—thatt lost garden regain'd,  
lost once thru' pride and now by long stooping regain'd,—  
a pictur and outward symbol of the comfort of them  
whose spirits dwell in the Eden that the Muse hath made  
her garden of soul in *the golden lapses of Time*;  
and if, tracing to its source some Heliconian rill,  
its mossgrown cave is found in the black splinter'd rock, 520



### III

where thatt once cool'd and stay'd, a volcanic moraine  
to bank his blossom'd Paradise and feed his vines,  
ther-after to the poet all his joy wil seem 530  
*a strange mysterious dream*, a thread of beauty eterne  
enwoven in mortal change, and he himself a flower  
fertilized awhile on the quench'd torrent of Hell.

Now when Rome's mitred prelates ambled o'er the Alps  
to hold the Gallic provinces, whose overlords  
their missionaries had won to the confession of Christ,  
the pagan folk submissiv to constraint wer driv'n  
in flocks to th' font, but got little washing therein.

Whatever of kindliness Tacitus once had found  
sequester'd in the rude homesteads of Germany 540  
was burnt up in thatt fiery ordeal, which taught them  
the joy of frenzy and prowess, and the songs whereby  
they glorify'd the memory of successful lust,  
and stirr'd anew the fierce delight of battle and blood.

A wilder strain maybe than the lost Bedouin songs,  
that seal'd the weird which the Angel in Araby foretold  
to the outcast bondwoman in the famishing desert,  
and she to her son,—that his horoscope was to range  
like the wild ass untameable, and his hand should be  
'gainst ev'ry man, and ev'ry man's hand against him. 550

Wherefor hitting for remedy on Plato's old plan,  
when he proscribed Homer from his Utopian schools—

### III

saying that morals wer unteachable to men  
who imputed mortal passions to the immortal gods—,  
the priests denounced the bards, and would hav stopp'd their mouths;  
but finding that forbiddance met with no regard  
they turn'd to assure their flock by amity, and to comb  
the fleece they might not shear: upon which way they wrought  
some mitigation, and growing reconciled to the art,  
and grudging to the heathen what might serve the Church, 560  
they took thought to divert it, and engaged the bards  
to make like stirring balladry of the Bible tales:  
wherein, joining themselves with good heart to the work,  
their first grains of allowance multiply'd to pounds;  
while with their clerkly skill they sat fast to transcribe  
the old pagan tales, redacted to the amended form  
in which we know them, with what other numberless  
wonder-lives of the Saints they wrote, symbolic masques  
of Christian orthodoxy, and later mystery-plays.

So all these diverse stuffs thru' the dark centuries 570  
lay quietly a-soak together in the dye-vats, wherein  
our British Arthur was clandestinely christen'd  
and crown'd, and all his knights cleansed and respiration,  
re clothed as might be: for the dispossess'd devils  
had kindly accepted their rebate, content to find  
their old home swept and garnish'd; and tho' verily  
in their domestication, as 'tis with brutes, they had lost  
keenness of sense and true compact of character,

### III

they flourish to this day the darlings of our poets,  
who drape their model Arthur to their taste, whereas 580  
time was when good St. Andrew strode forth in plate-mail.

While thus the Catechists made compromising peace  
with the poetry of SELFHOOD, ere the fight was won  
in rescue of womanhood from the ravish of war,  
a new era had dawn'd and a new strain of song,  
the young poetry of BREED; and the conflict therewith  
is in my story styled the second Essene War.

'Twas no Huns now that stirr'd the Frankish heart to sing,  
nay rather Athena's call, and the gracious emblems  
of Hellenic humanity, that long had drown'd 590  
where they had sunk o'erwhelm'd in the wreckage of Rome,  
undersuck'd in the wallow, when Cæsar's great ship  
founder'd with all its toys decadent in the deep,  
now freshly of their buoyancy up-struggling here and there  
to ride in sparkling dance on the desolat sea:  
Or what grave lore had refuged with the Ishmaelite  
was stealing back from exile to its western home,  
its mansion of birthright, and had now already inspired  
passionat Abelard, who with his ethnic books  
was heralding in Paris that full Renaissance 600  
which should illumine Europe, and plant her cities  
with Universities of learning, sanctuaries  
of spirit, our schools of thought and science to this day.

### III

Full Springtime was not yet surely, nor soon to be:  
 'twas as mayhap *à ce jour de Saint Valentin*  
*que chacun doit choisir son per*, or a later day  
 of February, when in the shelter'd woodland  
 the Sun with broadening smile thinketh to intercalate  
 a glad red-letter'd feast in Winter's almanac,  
 which the thrush boldly announceth—tho' the migrant birds      610  
 hav yet made no return upon the balmy sprays,  
 but the small homekeepers muster what choir they can:  
 Not otherwise was thatt first impetuous raid that storm'd  
 the rear of the dark ages prematurely; and yet  
 the singers wer so many that man marveleth stil  
 whence they came, or by what spontaneous impulse sang.

As well might be with one who wendeth lone his way  
 beside the watchful dykes of the flat Frisian shore,  
 what hour the wading tribes, that make their home and breed  
 numberless on the marshy polders, creep unseen      620  
 widely dispersed at feed, and silent neath the sun  
 the low unfeatured landscape seemeth void of life—  
 when without warning suddenly all the legion'd fowl  
 rise from their beauties' ambush in the reedy beds,  
 and on spredd wings with clamorous ecstasy  
 carillioning in the air manœuvre, and where they wheel  
 transport the broken sunlight, shoaling in the sky—  
 with like sudden animation the fair fields of France  
 gave birth to myriad poets and singers unknown,

### III

who in a main flight gathering their playful flock 630  
settled in Languedoc, on either side the Rhone  
within the court and county of Raymond of Toulouse.

Nor wer these Troubadours hucksters of song who tuned  
their pipes for fee: some far glimpse of the heav'nly Muse  
had reach'd and drawn the soul by the irresistible  
magnet of love: as when in the blockish marble  
the sculptor's thought of beauty loometh into shape  
neath his rude hammerstrokes, ere the true form is seen;  
so had the monks' rough-hewing of the old pagan tales  
discover'd virtue:—an Ideal of womanhood 640  
had striven into outline; which, tho' passion heeded not  
yet art had grasp'd, divining fresh motiv for skill,  
whereby knights, churchmen, monks, courtiers and scholars all  
childishly wer enthrall'd: ev'n kings found honor in rhyme  
whose royalty is today its only honor, and to us  
would seem frivolity, knew we not that we watch  
beside the rocking-cradle of babes, whose prattling tongues  
should oust monarchic Latin from his iron throne—  
which not the slaughter of this one innocent coud save:  
Skysoarers should be rear'd of such young flutterers; 650  
for whom two freaks of fortune happily conspired,  
a fine phantasy of spirit with light fabric of art;  
so the faint dream of chivalry, as it took-on form,  
tripp'd delicatly with the delicat music  
of the tentativ language, whose mincing metres

### III

imposed good manners on the articulation of speech.

While in such play Count Raymond's folk lived joyfully,  
Provence seem'd to mankind the one land of delight,—  
a country where a man might fairly choose to dwell;  
tho' some would rather praise the green languorous isles, 660  
Hawaii or Samoa, and some the bright Azores,  
Kashmire the garden of Ind, or Syrian Lebanon  
and flowery Carmel; or wil vaunt the unstoried names  
of African Nairobi, where by Nyanza's lakes  
Nile hid his flooding fountain, or in the New World  
far Pasadena's roseland, whence who saileth home  
westward wil in his kalendar find a twin day.

But I in England starving neath the unbroken glooms  
of thatt dreariest November which wrapping the sun,  
damping all life, had robb'd my poem of the rays 670  
whose wealth so far had sped it, I long'd but to be  
i' the sunshine with my history; and the names that held  
place in my heart and now shall hav place in my line  
wer Avignon, Belcaire, Montélimar, Narbonne,  
Béziers, Castelnauary, Béarn and Carcassonne,  
and truly I coud hav shared their fancy coud I hav liv'd  
among those glad Jongleurs, living again for me,  
and had joy'd with them in thatt liberty and good-will  
which men call toleration, a thing so stiff to learn  
that to sceptics 'tis left and cynics. In Provence 680  
Jew quarrel'd not with Gentile; ther was peace and love

### III

'twixt Saracen and Christian, Catalan and Frank;  
and (wonder beyond wonder) here was harbour'd safe,  
flourishing and multiplying, thatt sect of all sects  
abominable, persecuted and defamed,  
who with their Eastern chaffering and insidious talk  
had ferreted thru' Europe to find peace on earth  
with Raymond of Toulouse,—those ancient Manichees.

Restless and impatient man's mind is ever in quest  
of some system or mappemonde or safeguard of soul, 690  
and coming not at Truth—ev'n as a dry-athirst horse  
that drinketh eagerly of the first gilded puddle,—  
he espouseth delusion and sweareth fealty thereto:  
and since common conditions breed common opinion,  
nations lie fascinated in their swaddling clothes  
crampt, and atrophied with their infantile suction.  
So in the inmost sanctum of the Hindu mind  
a milch-cow is enshrined: but those dour Manichees  
wer trifling with no symbols; their wild faith had grown  
deep-rooted on the prime obsession of savagery, 700  
thatt first terrifying nightmare of dawning conscience  
which, seeing in nature a power maleficent to man,  
estopp'd his growth in love: for these zealots ascribed  
this visible world to the work of a devil,  
from all time Goddes foe and enemy to all good:  
In hate of which hellpower so worthy of man's defiance

### III

they had lost the old fear, and finding internecine war  
declared twixt flesh and spirit in the authentic script  
of Paul of Tarsus, him they took for master, and styled  
themselves Paulicians the depositaries of Christ.

710

Their creed—better than other exonerating God  
from blame of evil—and their austere asceticism  
shamed the half-hearted clerics, whose licence in sin  
confirm'd the uncompromising logic, which inferr'd  
a visible earthly Church to be Satan's device,  
the Pope his minister,—him, the third Innocent,  
who held his wide ambition for the will of God,  
his fulminating censure for the voice of Christ;  
and, troubled now that he could neither cleanse nor cure,  
persuade not nor command, fell; and betray'd by zeal  
(as angry Peter once to serve Christ with the sword),  
preach'd a Crusade within the fold,—thatt bloody wrath  
label'd in history The Albigensian war,  
a sinking millstone heavy as ever pontiff tied  
round the neck of the Church. For the champions of Christ  
outdid the heathen Huns in cruelty, and in the end  
was Raymond's county ravaged to ruin and his folk  
massacred all or burnt alive, man woman and child,  
and their language wiped out, so that a man today  
reading Provençal song studieth in a dead tongue.

720

730

Yet many Troubadours escaping from slaughter  
fled to the Italian cities where the New Learning



### III

gave kind asylum to their secret flame; and ere  
within the Church's precincts they had raised a song,  
Chivalry had won acceptance in the ideal of sex  
and, blending with the worship of the Mother of God,  
assured the consecration of MARRIAGE, still unknown  
save to the christian folk of Europe whence it sprang.

Thus, as it came to pass, the second Essene War  
brought the New Life in which full soon Dante was born.

740

The motive of Selfhood is common to all Being,  
the universal Mind informing existence,  
and had ther been no beauty in life nor any joy  
beyond thatt ground-pleasure, which all creatures may feel  
in the incontinent functionings of their organisms  
and satisfaction of instinct—had thatt been, ev'n so  
nothing had lack'd to inspire the selfassertion of man:  
But since ther is beauty in nature, mankind's love of life  
apart from love of beauty is a tale of no count;  
and tho' he linger'd long in his forest of fear,  
or e'er his apprehensiv wonder at unknown power  
threw off the first night-terrors of his infant mind,  
the vision of beauty awaited him, and step by step  
led him in joy of spirit to full fruition.

750

Now as with Selfhood so was it again with Breed;

### III

for the fashioning of sex was attended thru'out  
by necessary attractions—as 'tis seen in plant  
or animal, and these as they suffice in brutes  
suffice in man so far as he also is animal;  
but being specifically endow'd he must in course  
hav with the growth of reason outgrown the animal wont;  
and in perfection of kind he surely had lost his lure,  
had he not learn'd in beauty to transfigure love.

760

Many shy at such doctrin: Science, they wil say,  
knoweth nought of this beauty. But what kenneth she  
of color or sound? Nothing: tho' science measure true  
every wave-length of ether or air that reacheth sense,  
there the hunt checketh, and her keen hounds are at fault;  
for when the waves hav pass'd the gates of ear and eye  
all scent is lost: suddenly escaped the visibles  
are changed to invisible; the fine-measured motions  
to immeasurable emotion; the cypher'd fractions  
to a living joy that man feeleth to shrive his soul.  
How should science find beauty? Leibnitz rightly is held  
the most irrefutable of all philosophers,  
because he boldly excised the intrinse knot from the rope  
and, showing both ends free, proclaim'd no knot had been;  
imagining two independent worlds that move  
in pre-establish'd harmony twixt matter and mind;  
—a pleasant freak of man's godlike intelligence,  
vex'd by so vain a need; and thinking, with a thought

770

780

### III

so inconceivable, to save appearances.

That ther is beauty in natur and that man loveth it  
are one thing and the same; neither can be derived  
apart as cause of the other: and here it is to tell  
how female beauty came to be the common lure  
in human marriage.—First in animal mating  
the physical attractions, as they evolved with sense,  
took-on beautiful forms, til beauty (as in bird-song)  
was recognized consciently and exploited by art, 790  
and after in man became that ladder of joy whereon  
slowly climbing at heaven he shall find peace with God,  
and beauty be wholly spiritualised in him,  
as in its primal essence it must be conceived.

This ken we truly, that as wonder to intellect,  
so for the soul desire of beauty is mover and spring;  
whence, in whatever his spirit is most moved, a man  
wil most be engaged with beauty; and thus in his “first love”  
physical beauty and spiritual are both present  
mingled inseparably in his lure: then is he seen 800  
in the ecstasy of earthly passion and heav’nly vision  
to fall to idolatry of some specious appearance  
as if’twer very incarnation of his heart’s desire,  
whether eternal and spiritual, as with Dante it was,  
or mere sensuous perfection, or as most commonly  
a fusion of both—when if distractedly he hav thought  
to mate mortally with an eternal essence

### III

all the delinquencies of his high passion ensue.

Verily if Hope wer not itself a happiness  
sorrow would far outweigh our mortal joy, but Hope 810  
incarnat in the blood kindleth its hue no less  
with every breath, to flood all the sluices of life  
long as the heart can beat. And yet in love-mating  
hope's ideal is so rich and fulfilment so rare,  
that common minds in trudge with common experience  
may think to amend their lot by renouncing life-vows,  
as a vain bondage perversiv of happiness.

And coud man separate brutal from spiritual,  
and in things of the flesh liv as animals do  
stealing their food and seizing the delight of the hour, 820  
thatt were reasonable enough and might be wise in man;  
but such divorcement being in the provision of things  
shut out, ther is no way left nor choice for him, unless  
he would make shipwreck, and of mere brutality  
fall to pieces—ther is no hope for him but to attune  
nature's diversity to a human harmony,  
and with faith in his hope and full courage of soul  
realizing his will at one with all nature,  
devise a spiritual ethick for conduct in life.

Refusal of christian marriage is, as 'twere in art, 830  
to impugn the credit of the most beautiful things  
because ther are so few of them, and hold it folly  
to aim at excellence where so few can succeed;

### III

and where any success pincheth the happiness  
of the far greater number, who left to themselves  
might feel fuller content admiring common things  
or ugly, and be happier in whatever likings  
they can indulge. Altho' they know it not, this is  
the humanitarianism of democracy;  
and since ther is in the mass little good to look for  
but what instruction, authority and example impose,  
Ethick and Politick alike hav trouble in store.

840

Now mere impulse of sex,—from animal mating  
to the vision of Dante—tho' strong in all degrees,  
is not the bond of marriage. Nay, if breeding ceased,—  
all motiv to it, liking for it and thought of it,—  
women and men would mate; and, whatever might lack,  
married life might be found a more congenial state,  
and *marriage of true minds* hav less *impediment*.  
Happiness, which all seek, is not composable  
of any summation of particular pleasures;  
the happiness in marriage dependeth for-sure  
not on the animal functions, but on qualities  
of spirit and mind that are correlated therewith.

850

So 'twas not of false ethick or weak prudery  
when thatt old Hebrew poet, in his mighty myth  
of man's creation, imagin'd Eve's predestiny  
to be helpmate and comfort to God's perfect man;

### III

nor in thatt strange fashioning of her from Adam's rib  
fudged he his symbol; perfect man being in thatt theft 860  
imperfected by loss of an original part  
now personate in Eve, of whom he should require  
what was in first design confused in his nature,  
and from thatt fleshly cleavage find true tally of flesh.

This myth was law to th' Jew, and 'twas men of their clan  
(those same Essenes whose creed prevail'd so long),  
who, when Christ's mournful company wer by his death  
reft of their earthly dreams, took courage and reset  
their disillusion'd hope bolder—to look no more  
for Rome and Cæsar's overthrow, but rather expect 870  
Jahveh's wrathful dissolution of all creation;  
that Christ would rëappear in pitiless Godhead  
full suddenly and full soon, to judge the world of sin,  
and with his angels gather-up his living elect  
to his new Jerusalem, those few Saints undefiled,  
who had *wash'd their robes to whiteness in the blood o' the Lamb.*

Now those stern Puritans who liv'd but in thatt faith,  
in whom motiv and lure of breed wer wholly extinct,  
execrating the body as other men flee death,  
had no fear of contamination nor thought of ill 880  
in taking women in marriage, each man one to himself,  
as comrades indispensable, of spiritual aid.

Truly myths so ancient and examples of life,

### III

fish'd-up out of the old jumble-box of history,  
can find but little credit with this generation  
who, like to children absorb'd in the scientific toys  
of their high-kilted gossips, care not to ransack  
the nursery cupboard for their grand-dam's old playthings;  
tho' family relics are they, once loved, and may show  
how that in man's eternal quest of happiness, 890  
contempt of fleshly pleasur is as near to his spirit  
as is the love of it to his animal nature.

Vestiges of his stony asceticism imbue  
all time, thick as the strewage of his flinty tools,  
disseminat wheresoe'er he hath dwelt; nor need we now,  
from where they sleep bedded on archæologic shelves,  
fetch down upon the lecture-table our specimens  
to teach what manners went to the making of man;  
having such living witness of harmonized life  
in the aristocracy of our English motherhood, 900  
whence the nobility of our sons came, and therewith  
precedence of their courtesy title in the world;  
a tradition of good-faith, humanity and courage,  
that year by year flowereth on the grafted stock  
of Saxon temperament; the which slow or dead  
to beauty, is but a dullard in spiritual sense.

And so the character of our common folk, up-built  
in the commanding presence of feminin grace,  
won therefrom (as I hold) its vulgar excelence;

### III

for finding their own conduct unconformable 910  
to beauty of so high grade, they guarded it apart  
submissiv in its own status, a kindly thing  
with nativ honesty and good commonsense convinced;  
and, easing embarrassment with the humour of life,  
paid due respect and honour where they felt 'twas due,  
so they might goodtemper'dly and in laughable wise  
hobnob with ugliness, and jest at frightfulness,  
and keep the farce up mirthfully in the face of death.

If any see not this fractur in our midst, because  
the pieces are in place, 'tis pictured for him true 920  
in Shakespeare's drama, where ideal women walk  
in worship, and the baser sort find sympathy,  
and both are bravely stirr'd together as water and oil.

But if 'tis ask'd to name what special function it was  
that fell sequester'd out of Adam in his lost rib,  
and which, when launch'd by Reason on his sea of troubles,  
should be his paregoric and comforting cure,—  
'twas no unique, ultimatly separable thing,  
as is a chemic element; far rather our moods,  
influences and spiritual affections are like 930  
those many organic substances which, tho' to sense  
wholly dissimilar and incomparable in kind,  
are yet all combinations of the same simples,  
and even in like proportions differently disposed;  
so that whether it be starch, oil, sugar, or alcohol



### III

'tis ever our old customers, carbon and hydrogen,  
pirouetting with oxygen in their morris antics;  
the chemist booketh all of them as C H O,  
and his art is as mine, when I but figurate  
the twin persistent semitones of my Grand Chant. 940

And 'twere but bookish, surely, in the fabric of mind  
to assume the disposition of vital elements  
under a few common names, alike in both sexes;  
'tis easier thought that ther is no human faculty  
that hath not been in long elaboration of sex  
adjusted finely, and often to such richer ends  
that, tho' by correlation characters of sex,  
they are not held in subservience to the impulse of Breed,—  
as some deem, and impute precocious puberty  
to new-born babes, and all their after trouble in life 950  
to shamefast thwarting of inveterat lust.

Now Woman took her jointure from the potency  
of spirit stored in flesh, the which, affined to her sex,  
became a property of intuition and grew in her,  
thru' mutual adaptation with the environments  
that wer its own effects, to a female character  
in worth alike and weakness distinct from the male:  
for while man's Reason drew him whither science led  
to walk with downcast eyes fix'd on the ground, and low  
incline his ear to catch the sermon-whisper of stones— 960

### III

whence now whole nations, by their treasure-trove enrich'd,  
crawl greedily on their knees nosing the soil like swine,  
and any, if they can twist their stiffen'd necks about,  
see the stars but as stones,—while men thus search'd the earth,  
stooping to pick up wisdom, women stood erect  
in honest human posture, from light's fount to drink  
celestial influences; and this was seen in them  
that worship'd Christ nor look'd, as then the apostles did,  
for some earthly prosperity or prospect, nor ask'd  
what chief seats might be theirs reserved in the Kingdom; 970  
his heav'nly call drew them, and the Mary who sat  
at Christ's feet in devotion, heard from him her choice  
pronounced the one thing needful; and as 'twas for her,  
so is it nowadays for us to our happiness.

For 'tis by such faith only a man can save his soul;  
since as his unique spirit cometh more and more  
out of slumber into vision, he loseth heart the more  
at the inhumanity of nature's omnipotence.  
Thatt first savage suspicion is now the last despair  
of earnest thinkers, who for love of truth refuse 980  
to blink dishonestly the tribulation of man,  
but deem it final truth, and see no cure thereof,  
nor solace save what brave distraction of thought may bring  
in further keen pursuit of knowledge, on the old path  
that hath hereby led them where the everlasting worm  
eateth their hearts . . . and yet man's Reason (as is confess'd)

### III

since 'tis of nature's fabric must share in her fault;  
and man's spiritual sense, which inspireth his grief,  
is equally of her giving: whence his complaint sheweth  
the strange perversity of creation's self-reproach; 990  
tho' nature the while is by beauty awakening  
her heav'nly response to her heavenliest desire,  
and in spiritual joy sanctioneth to the full  
the claim of faith. To such despairers Christ out-spake  
in his rich poetry '*Tis better with one eye  
blinded to enter into the life of Goddes Realm  
than with both eyes to grieve in Hell.* Be thatt not Truth,  
then ther is something found for man better than Truth;  
which thought wer the supreme vanity of vanities,  
at once a superhuman ambition and a poor pride, 1000  
truly *the last infirmity of his noble mind.*

From blind animal passion to the vision of Spirit  
all actual gradations come of natur, and each  
severally in time and place is answerable in man.  
As with the embryo which in normal growth passeth  
thru' evolutionary stages, at each stage  
consisting with itself agreeably, so Mind  
may be by observation in young changes waylaid,  
agreeable all, tho' no more congruous with themselves  
than what a baby thinketh of its naked feet, 1010

### III

when first it is aware of them, is like the thought  
of piteous sympathy with which when an old man  
he wil come to regard them. So likewise of BREED,  
youth and age hold their irreconcilable extremes,  
from him who deemeth sex to be the curse of man  
to him who findeth in it the only pleasur of life:  
then the four temperaments of blood possess of kind  
their different sensibilities, and every bias  
of education coloureth; while in abstract thought  
some would submit its energy to rule of state,  
to ethic duty some, others to personal health,  
to social propriety or the grace of good manners;  
climate can subjugate and religion constrain;  
national taste prescribe practice and fix ideals;  
yet howso no two men wil be found wholly alike,  
nor any one man always consonant in himself;  
the saint wil hav his days of humiliation and trial,  
the clown his rare moments of revelation and peace,  
while commonsense wil waver in its faith with fortune.

1020

Now as a physical object apparent to sense  
must in all its perspectivs be studied, tho' none  
be true wholly in itself, and reality is found  
by elimination of error, so 'twil be with Love,  
which, if it had no various aspects of feeling  
nor delusiv perspectivs to spiritual sight,  
neither coud it hav any essential property

1030

### III

in the Wisdom of God: thus men, who mostly liv  
in the light of one aspect and convinced thereby,  
wil deem of love differently, and in as many ways  
as ther be planes of spirit and faculties of mind: 1040  
and the philosopher expecteth little audience  
of men school'd to the habit of their own liking,  
and wer he heaven-inspired he should not therefor look  
to win the general ear; yet, one proviso allow'd,  
he may command agreement; so (saith he) if ther be  
any one scheme of Reason in the evolution of Mind  
preferable and probable—and without so much faith  
he would sit dumb—then thatt ideal wil be found  
in few, not in many, but potential in them,  
and in the best imperfect, a desire of all, 1050  
an everlasting hope not everlastingly  
to be rebuff'd and baffled, rather præordain'd  
by arch-creativ Wisdom, as man groweth to find  
his Will in Goddes pleasur, his pleasur in Goddes Will;  
drawn to thatt happiness by the irresistible  
predominant attraction, which worketh secure  
in mankind's Love of Beauty and in the Beauty of Truth.

Art is the true and happy science of the soul,  
exploring nature for spiritual influences,  
as doth physical science for comforting powers, 1060

### III

advancing so to a sure knowledge with like progress:  
but lovers who thereto look for expression of truth  
hav great need to remember that no plastic Art,  
tho' it create ideals noble as are the forms  
that Pheidias wrought, can ever elude or wholly escape  
its earthly medium; nor in its adumbrations  
reach thatt detach'd suprasensuous vision, wheretoe  
Poetry and Music soar, nor dive down in the mine  
where cold philosophy diggeth her fiery jewels—  
or only by rare magic may it sometimes escape.

1070

And this was the intuition of our landscape-painters,  
whose venture seem'd humbled in renouncing the prize  
of the classic contest, when like truants from school  
they made off to the fields with their satchels, and came  
on nature's beauteous by-paths into a purer air:  
For the Art of painting, by triumph of colouring  
enticed to Realism, had confounded thereby  
its own higher intention, and in portrayal of spirit  
made way for Symbolism which, tho' it stand aloof,  
is outfaced in the presence of direct feeling:  
Sithence in presentation of feminin beauty  
the highest Art lost mastery of its old ideal;  
as in the great pictur of the two Women at a Well,  
where Titian's young genius, devising a new thing,  
employ'd the plastic power to exhibit at once  
two diverse essences in their value and contrast;

1080

### III

for while by the æsthetic idealisation of form  
his earthly love approacheth to celestial grace,  
his draped Uranian figure is by symbols veil'd,  
and in pictorial Beauty suffereth defeat:

1090

Yea, despite all her impregnable confidence  
in the truth of her wisdom, as there she sitteth  
beside the fountain, dazzlingly apparel'd, enthroned,  
with thoughtful face impassiv, averting her head  
as 'twere for fuller attention so to incline an ear  
to the impartial hearing of the importunat plea  
of the other, who over-against her on the cornice-plinth  
posturing her wonted nakedness in sensuous ease,  
leaneth her body to'ards her, and with imploring grace  
urgeth the vain deprecation of her mortal prayer.

1100

Giorgione, his master, already had gone to death  
plague-stricken at prime, when Titian painted thatt picture,  
donning his rival's mantle, and strode to higher fame—  
yet not by this canvas; he who had it, hid it;  
nor won it public favour when it came to light,  
untill some mystic named it in the Italian tongue  
L'AMOR SACRO E PROFANO, and so rightly divined;  
for tho' ther is no record save the work of the brush  
to tell the intention, yet what the mind wrought is there;

### III

and who looketh thereon may see in the two left arms  
the symbolism apportioning the main design;  
for while the naked figure with extended arm  
and outspread palm vauntingly balanceth aloft  
a little lamp, whose flame lost in the bright daylight  
wasteth in the air, thatt other hath the arm bent down  
and oppositely nerved, and clencheth with gloved hand  
closely the cover'd vessel of her secret fire.

1110

Thus Titian hath pictured the main sense of my text,  
and this truth: that as Beauty is all with Spirit twined,  
so all obscenity is akin to the ugliness  
which Art would outlaw; whence cometh thatt tinsel honour  
and mimicry of beauty which is the attire of vice.

1120

Allegory is a cloudland inviting fancy  
to lend significance to chancey shapes; and here  
I deem not that the child, who playeth between the Loves  
at Titian's well, was pictured by him with purpose  
to show the first contact of love with boyhood's mind;  
and yet never was symbol more deftly devised:  
Mark how the child looking down on the water see'th  
only a reflection of the realities—as 'twas  
with the mortals in Plato's cave—nor more of them

1130



### III

than Moses saw of God; he can see but their backs,  
save for a shifty glimpse of the pleading profil  
of earthly Love (which also is subtle truth); and most  
how in his play his plunged hand stirreth to and fro  
both images together in a confused dazzle  
of the dancing ripples as he gazeth intent.

# THE TESTAMENT OF BEAUTY

## *Book Four*

### ETHICK

**B**EAUTY, the eternal Spouse of the Wisdom of God  
and Angel of his Presence thru' all creation,  
fashioning her new love-realm in the mind of man,  
attempteth every mortal child with influences  
of her divine supremacy . . . ev'n as in a plant  
when the sap mounteth secretly and its wintry stalk  
breaketh out in the prolific miracle of Spring,  
or as the red blood floodeth into a beating heart  
to build the animal body comely and strong; so she  
in her transcendant rivalry would flush his spirit  
with pleasurable ichor of heaven: and where she hath found  
responsiv faculty in some richly favour'd soul—

10

*L'anima vaga delle cose belle*, as saith  
the Florentine,—she wil inaugurate her feast  
of dedication, and even in thatt earliest onset,  
when yet infant Desire hath neither goal nor clue  
to fix the dream, ev'n then, altho' it graspeth nought  
and passeth in its airy vision away, and dieth  
out of remembrance, 'tis in its earnest of life  
and dawn of bliss purer and hath less of earthly tinge  
than any other after-attainment of the understanding:

20

## IV

for all man's knowledge kenneth also of toil and flaw,  
and even his noblest works, tho' they illume the dark  
with individual consummation, are cast upon  
by the irrelevant black shadows of time and fate.

Hence is the fascination of amateurs in art,  
who renouncing accomplishment attain the prize  
of their humbler devotion,—as Augustin saith,  
that fools may come at holiness where wise men miss,

*Facit enim hoc quaedam etiam stoliditas,—*

30

arriving by short-coming, like to homely birds  
of passage, nesting on the roofs of the workshops.

And tho' of secret knowledge man's art is compact,

yet not the loving study of any master-work,

nor longest familiarity can ever efface

its birthday of surprisal; and great music to me

is glorify'd by memory of one timeless hour

when all thought fled scared from me in my bewilderment.

See then the boy in first encounter with beauty,

his nativ wonder awaken'd by the motion of love;

40

as when live air, breathing upon a smother'd fire,

shooteth the smouldering core with tiny flames—so he

kindleth at heart with eternal expectancies,

and the dream within him looketh out at his eyes.

'Twas thru' worship of Christ that this thing came to men,

whereat, when art achieved portrayal of tenderness,

the christian painters throng'd their heav'n with cherubims,

## IV

little amorini, who with rebel innocence  
dispossess'd the tall angels; and Mary's young babe  
cast-off his swaddling bands, and stood-up on her lap 50  
in grace of naked childhood for the image of God.

But as 'tis with the Race, for which our hope draweth  
the only assurance of its high nobility  
from rare examples, holy men and wise, revered  
ev'n by the common folk, that none the less pursue  
their common folly interminably, and more and more  
pamper despair that is the giant sorrow of earth—  
so in the child this glimpse or touch of immanence,  
being a superlativ brief moment of glory,  
is too little to leaven the inveterate lump of life; 60  
and the instincts whose transform'd vitality should lust  
after spiritual things, return to their vomit  
and wallow in the mire of their animal ruts.

Nature hath something truly of her promise in all:  
yet, in the infinit disposition of random seeds,  
her full potency is rare; as in the end of his book  
that maketh the old school-benches yet to sprout in green,  
Aristotle confesseth: where the teacher saith  
virtue cannot be taught to a mind not well disposed  
by natur, and he that hath thatt rarest excellence, 70  
διὰ τινος θεῖος αἰτίως, may be above all men  
styled truly fortunat; and with those four Greek words  
hath proudly prick'd to virtue many a sluggard soul.

#### IV

Forsooth the need of Fortune stayeth not here, alas!  
Ther is no assurance of stability or fair growth,  
unless she stand by faithfully and foster the soul,  
fending from all evil and encompassing with good,  
the while these intimations come to be understood  
and harmonized by Reason in the conduct of life.

Now as Reason matured to the power of manhood,  
tutor'd by disciplin of natur, and ordering  
the accumulated scrutiny of physical flux  
in various sciences, so education of spirit,  
in the dignity of its creativ enthusiasms  
and honorable intelligence of Goddes gifts,  
mapp'd out its own science of conduct, aligning  
a pathway of happiness thru' the valley of death:  
and thatt science, call'd Ethick, dealing with the skill  
and manage of the charioteer in Plato's myth,  
rangeth up here in place for the parley of this book.

80

90

Since all Ethick implyeth a sense of Duty in man,  
'tis first to enquire whence that responsible OUGHT arose;  
a call so universal and plain-spoken that some  
hav abstracted a special faculty, distinct  
from animal bias and underivable,  
whereby the creature kenneth the creator's Will,  
that, in stillness of sound speaking to gentle souls,

## IV

dowereth all silence with the joy of his presence;  
but to men savage or superstitious a voice  
of horror, maleficent, inescapable, 100  
hounding them with fearful conviction of sin, as when  
Adam in Eden hid from the scour of God's eye.  
Which old tale of displeasur is true to life: because  
the imperativ obligation cannot be over-summ'd,  
being in itself the self-conscience of thatt Essence  
which is no other indeed than the prime ordinance  
that we call Law of Nature,—in its grade the same  
with the determin'd habit of electrons, the same  
with the determining instinct of unreasoning life,  
NECESSITY become conscient in man—whereto 110  
all insubordination is imperfection in kind.

Reality appeareth in forms to man's thought  
as several links interdependent of a chain  
that circling returneth upon itself, as doth  
the coil'd snake that in art figureth eternity.

From Universal Mind the first-born atoms draw  
their function, whose rich chemistry the plants transmute  
to make organic life, whereon animals feed  
to fashion sight and sense and give service to man,  
who sprung from them is conscient in his last degree 120  
of ministry unto God, the Universal Mind,  
whither all effect returneth whence it first began.

## IV

The Ring in its repose is Unity and Being:  
Causation and Existence are the motion thereof.  
Thru'out all runneth Duty, and the conscience of it  
is thatt creativ faculty of animal mind  
that, wakening to self-conscience of all Essences,  
closeth the full circle, where the spirit of man  
escaping from the bondage of physical Law  
re-entereth eternity by the vision of God.

130

This absolution of Reason is not for all to see:  
But any man may picture how Duty was born,  
and trace thereafter its passage in the ethick of man.

Ther is a young black ouzel, now building her nest  
under the Rosemary on the wall, suspiciously  
shunning my observation as I sit in the porch,  
intentiv with my pencil as she with her beak:

Coud we discourse together, and wer I to ask for-why  
she is making such pother with thatt rubbishy straw,  
her answer would be surely: 'I know not, but I MUST.'

140

Then coud she take persuasion of Reason to desist  
from a purposeless action, in but a few days hence  
when her eggs wer to hatch, she would look for her nest;  
and if another springtide found us here again,  
with memory of her fault, she would know a new word,  
having made conscient passage from the MUST to the OUGHT.

I halt not then nor stumble at how the duteous call

## IV

was gotten in course of nature, rather it lieth to show  
how it was after-shapen in man from physical  
to moral ends, and came no longer only to affirm 150  
but sometimes even to oppose the bidding of instinct,  
positing beside OUGHT the equivalent OUGHT NOTS,  
the stern forbiddances of those tables of stone  
that Moses fetch'd out of the thunder of Sinai.

And since we see how man's judgment of Right and Wrong  
varieth with education—and thatt without effect  
to strengthen or weaken Duty—, we conclude therefrom  
that education shapeneth our moralities.

And when and whereas Conscience transfigureth the Instincts  
—to affection, as aforesaid, from motherly selfhood, 160  
and to spiritual love from lust of breed—, we find  
Duty therewith extended in the moral field.

Thus 'tis (as missionaries tell) that head-hunters  
who seek relish in refinement of cruelty,  
wil yet to soft feelings respond at gentle appeal:  
my dog would do as well, coud he understand my speech.

Yet tho' we see how birds in catering for their young  
stint not their self-devotion, and punctiliously observe  
distributiv justice; and that dutiful dogs  
urged by conflicting calls wil stand awhile perplex'd 170  
in dumb deliberation—ne'ertheless, because  
the true spiritual combat is unknown to brutes,  
moralists teaching virtue as an end-in-itself



## IV

repudiate any sanction from motifs engaged  
on animal welfare, and make utility  
a cant term of reproach; tho' on their higher plane  
spiritual conduct also is utilitarian:

For virtue subserveth the soul's comfort and joy,  
therewithal no less useful, nay more requisit  
than is material comfort to our full happiness  
in self-realization of perfected nature;  
the which a sound doctrin of pleasure wil confirm.

180

Denial of Use hath done our virtue wrong, while some  
belittle also our Ethick, saying the subject is  
of matter unknowledgeable in scientific sense,  
taking contingency from the imperfection of man.  
Granted, wer all men perfect, none would seek virtue;  
nor should I now debate of it; but neither again  
wer all omniscient, would any seek knowledge:  
yet go we hunting after truth insatiably  
as the Saints after holiness, who, comforted  
by least attainment, persevere,—*Seeking the Lord*  
*whom they hav found*: and if a check or fault show more  
in Ethick, 'tis that the hunter is on fuller cry  
after true happiness than after mental truth;  
or he thinketh at least to hav well nosed his desire,  
and he nameth his quarry 'Satisfaction of soul.'  
Whereas of absolute Truth, whatever thatt may be,  
or is, he hath not an inkling, nay nor any cause,

190

#### IV

save in spiritual faith, ev'n to hope well of it. 200  
( 'Tis for such lack of stand that deep thinkers, who plot  
intellectual approaches to the unknown, will lean  
unconsciously upon ethick, or in the end incline  
graciously to'ards it.) Now any deficiency  
is more discernible in an object known than in  
a thing unknown to us, and in the discussion of it  
ther is better likelihood of agreement.

Altho' good disposition (as Aristotle hath it)  
may be by beauty educated, and aspire  
to theoretic wisdom (as Plato would teach) 210  
and Ethick therewithal claim honor of the same rank  
that ideal philosophy ascribeth to man,  
yet, if for lack of faith he sink that claim, I see  
a thing of hap without place in Reality.

On no hand is't deny'd that terms of Right and Wrong  
are wholly pertinent to man's condition on earth;  
nor that, whatever his destiny may be, his origin  
was bestial and his first ethick a rudiment,  
that shifting ever and shaping in the story of man  
at every time is the index of his growth in grace; 220  
and, if the change of customs that the herd adopt  
for comfort and to insure what they most value in life,  
hath moral tendency upward, then thatt tendency is  
the animal sanction of virtue, and wil take honor as such.

## IV

But Duty instill'd with order is so almighty of kind  
 that 'twil make Law of Habit, whence all social codes  
 outlast their turn and time, and in arrear of life  
 hold the common folk backward from their nobler vaunt,  
 lagging and dragging, whether as a garment outgrown  
 tatter'd and foolish, or as strong fetters and chains 230  
 wherein *they lie fast-bound in misery and iron.*

Hence cometh all the need and fame of TEACHERS, men  
 of inborn nobility, call'd Prophets of God,  
 Saviours of society, Seers of the promised land,—  
 thatt white-filleted company that Aeneas found  
 circled around Musæus in the Elysian fields,  
 the loved and loveable whose names liv evermore,  
 the sainted pioneers of salvation, unto whom  
 all wisdom won and all man's future hope is due;  
 and with inspiration of their ampler air we see 240  
 our Ethick split up shear and sharply atwain; two kinds  
 diverse in kind ther be; the one of social need,  
 lower, stil holding backward in the clutch of earth,  
 from old animal bondage unredeem'd; the other  
 higher and spiritual, that by personal affiance  
 with beauty hath made escape, soaring away to where  
 the Ring of Being closeth in the Vision of God.

Sticklers for equality wil hear nought of this,  
 arguing that social is but a past-personal,  
 personal a future-social, tenses of one verb, 250

## IV

the *amatum* and *amabo* on the stem of 'love,'  
 virtue's pure nativ stock which hath no need of graft;  
 —a doctrin kindly at heart, that cajoleth alike  
 diffidence of the ruler and conceit of the crowd,  
 who in collusion float its credit; and awhile  
 their ship of state runneth like the yacht in the race  
 that with full bellying sail, for lack of seamanship,  
 seemeth to forge ahead while it loseth leeway.

No Politick admitteth nor did ever admit  
 the teacher into confidence: nay ev'n the Church, 260  
 with hierarchy in conclave compassing to install  
 Saint Peter in Cæsar's chair, and thereby win for man  
 the promises for which they had loved and worship'd Christ,  
 relax'd his heav'nly code to stretch her temporal rule.  
 For social Ethick with its legalized virtue  
 is but in true semblance, alike for praise or blame,  
 a friendly domestication of man's old wolf-foe,  
 the adaptable subservient gentlemanly dog,  
 beneath groom'd coat and collar in his passion unchanged.

Thus 'tis that levelers, deeming all ethick one, 270  
 and for being Socialists thinking themselves Teachers,  
 can preach class-hatred as the enlighten'd gospel of love;  
 but should they look to find firm scientific ground,  
 whereon to found their creed in the true history  
 of social virtue and of its progress hitherto,  
 'twil be with them in their research, as 'twas with him

## IV

who yesteryear sat down in Mesopotamy  
 to dig out Abram's birthplace in the lorn grave-yard  
 of Asian monarchies;—and low hummocks of dust  
 betray where legendary cities lie entomb'd, 280  
 Chaldæan KISH and UR; while for all life today  
 poor nomads, with their sparse flotilla of swarthy tents  
 and slow sand-faring camels, cruise listlessly o'erhead,  
 warreners of the waste: Now this man duly unearth'd  
 the walls whence Terah flitted, but beneath those walls  
 more walls, and the elder buildings of a dynasty  
 of wider rule than Abram knew, a nation extinct  
 ere he was born: where-thru' sinking deeper their shafts  
 the diggers came yet never on virgin soil, but stil  
 wondering on earlier walls, arches and masonry, 290  
 a city and folk undremt of in archæology,  
 trodden-under ere any story of man began; and there,  
 happening on the king's tomb, they shovel'd from the dust  
 the relics of thatt old monarch's magnificence—  
 Drinking vessels of beaten silver or of clean gold,  
 vases of alabaster, obsidian chalices,  
 cylinder seals of empire and delicat gems  
 of personal adornment, ear-rings and finger-rings,  
 craftsmen's tools copper and golden, and for music a harp;  
 withal in silver miniatur his six-oar'd skiff, 300  
 a model in build and trim of such as ply today  
 Euphrates' flowery marshes: all his earthly toys

## IV

gather'd to him in his grave, that he might nothing lack  
in the unknown life beyond, but find ready to hand  
his jewel'd dice and gaming board and chamber-lamp,  
his toilet-box of paints and unguents—Therefore 'twas  
the chariot of his pride whereon he still would ride  
was buried with him; there lay yet the enamel'd film  
of the inlaid perish'd wood, and all the metal gauds  
that had emboss'd the rail: animal masks in gold,  
wild bulls and lions, and twin-figured on the prow  
great panther-heads to glare in silver o'er the course,  
impatient of their spring: and one rare master-work  
whose grace the old warrior wist not should outliv the name  
and fame of all his mighty doings, when he set it up  
thatt little nativ donkey, his mascot on the pole.

310

'Twas he who dug told me of these things and how,  
finding himself a housebreaker in the home of men  
who sixty hundred years afore, when they left life,  
had seal'd their tombs from sacrilege and there had lain,  
til from the secresy of their everlasting sleep  
he had torn the coverlet—his spirit, dazed awhile  
in wonder, suddenly was strick'n with great horror;  
for either side the pole, where lay the harness'd bones  
of the yoke-mated oxen, there beside their bones  
lay the bones of the grooms, and slaughter'd at their post  
all the king's body-guard, each liegeman spear in hand,  
in sepulchred attention; and whereby lay the harp

320

#### IV

the arm-bones of the player, as there she had pluck'd her dirge,  
lay mingled with its fragments; and nearby disposed, 330  
two rows of skeletons, her sisterly audience  
whose lavish ear-pendants and gold-filleted hair,  
the uniform decoration of their young service,  
mark'd them for women of the harem, sacrificed  
to accompany their lord, the day when he set forth  
to enter into the presence of the scepter'd shades  
congregated with splendour in the mansions of death.

Leave Tigris now and Ur. Seek out our Aryan race  
by Gunga and Hydaspes in the teeming realm  
where Sakya Muni preach'd of gentleness and love, 340  
and took divinity before Christ came: see how  
at every Rajah's pyre, in Punjab or Kashmire,  
in Vijayanóggar, Kalikata and Udaipur,  
for liv-long centuries the mild Hindus hav burnt  
their multitudinous girl-concubines alive,  
and still beneath our lax imperial rule wil deem  
any honest outlawry of their ritual Suttee  
a tyrannous impiety of our western manners;  
which none the less withheld not of our island kings  
the last Henry, styled first Defendër of the Faith, 350  
from slaying his wives at will; nor was he for such crime  
less esteem'd of the folk; altho' judged as a man  
by pagan ethick or christian or by the insight  
of poet or historian, more despicable

#### IV

than we need to suppose thatt old monarch of Ur.

See how cross-eyed the pride of our world-wide crusade  
against Nigerian slavery, while the London poor  
in their Victorian slums lodged closer and filthier  
than the outraged alien; and under liberty's name  
our Industry is worse fed and shut out from the sun.—  
In every age and nation a like confusion is found.

360

IF DUTY held us long, now as in the old adage  
PLEASURE may follow after, taking like second rank  
in Plato's myth, as I twist it: wherein we traced  
Duty from the selfhood of individual life  
growing to reach communion with life eternal;  
while in the younger horse was pleasur intensified  
by love, untill it issueth in the love of God.  
And yet hath pleasure truly its main stronghold in Self,  
because the-greatest pleasure that man knoweth, is aye  
the pleasur of life, even as his chief displeasur is death.

370

This Life-joy, like the breath-kiss of the all-ambient air  
unnoticed til the lack of it bring pain and death,  
is coefficient with the untrammel'd energy  
of nativ faculty, and the autometric scale  
of all functions and motions, which in the animal  
struggle for Self persistently against all hindrance:  
it is the lordly heraldry of the banner'd flower,



#### IV

in brutes the vaunt of vigour and the pose of pride,  
their wild impersonation of majesty; and in man 380  
the grace and ease of health alike in body and mind,  
thatt right congruity of his parts, for lack whereof  
his sanity is disabled maim'd and compromised.

From personal pleasure then, seeing how good it is,  
and how a good man's pleasures all are good, it came  
an easy thought for men in quest of happiness  
to take it for their aim in all conduct, the account  
and logic of Ethick. So, flaunting their motto  
"Pleasure for pleasure's sake," these doughty Hedonists,  
having got rid of whatsoever oldfashion'd king 390  
had ruled by right divine, chose out for his good looks  
and crown'd this gay pretender, against whose privilege  
men in the street and schoolmen are for once agreed;  
because none wil deny that some pleasures are bad,  
while all men honour them who for their honour's sake  
wil suffer pain, and risk the great displeasur of death.

Pure Hedonism therefore is confuted off-hand;  
and its social pretension is but a will-o-the wisp;  
as if the honest pleasur of a wise man could lie  
in furthering or conniving-at the pleasur of them 400  
who know not ev'n their own unhappiness, nor how  
ere they can win happiness they must learn wisdom  
by paths difficult and to them unpleasurable.  
Nor is spiritual Hedonism in better plight,

#### IV

for some are found to take spiritual pleasur in crime.

'Twould seem then the prime task of Ethick to discern  
'twixt pleasures good and bad: but first 'twere well to show  
how ever it came that Pleasure, being the champion  
of our integrity, should in the event appear  
virtue's insidious foe; for-sure ther is no knowledge 410  
in the wisdom of conduct cardinal as is this.

Now in my thought the manner of it was on this wise—  
As Pleasure came in man to the conscience of self,  
his Reason abstracted it as an idea, and when  
he found the pleasur increasing with the conscience of it,  
he dwelt thereon, and seeking more and more to enrich  
his conscious pleasur, and bloating it with luxury,  
invented and indulged vices unknown to brutes.  
Thus was nature's intention thwarted: whereupon 420  
(seeing also how brooding upon sensual delight  
provoketh the desire, which, so long as the mind  
be but engaged healthily or distracted apart,  
would never rise to emotion) Moralists took fright,  
and Teachers banishing pleasure from Ethick, where  
they should hav been content with a danger-signal,  
posted a prohibition, and not only forbade  
pleasur as a motiv for any conduct, but ruled  
that any admixur of intention or its chance presence  
deprived conduct of merit: whence pleasure with them,  
instead of being an in-itself absolute good 430

## IV

as nature would have had it, and which man would wish  
to be always present and with his perfection increase,  
came to be bann'd as the pollution of virtue;—And so,  
when the young poet my companion in study  
and friend of my heart refused a peach at my hands,  
he being then a housecarl in Loyola's menie,  
'twas that he fear'd the savor of it, and when he waived  
his scruple to my banter, 'twas to avoid offence.

But I, upon thatt day which after fifty years  
is near as yesterday, was no stranger to fear  
of pleasure, but had grown fearful of thatt fear; yet since  
the sublimation of life whereto the Saints aspire  
is a self-holocaust, their sheer asceticism  
is justified in them; the more because the bent  
and nativ color of mind that leadeth them aloof,  
or driveth, is thatt very delicacy of sense,  
whereby a pinprick or a momentary whiff  
or hairbreadth motion freëth the detent of force  
that can distract them wholly from their high pursuit:  
wherefor they fly God's garden, whose forbidden fruit  
(seemeth to them) was sweeten'd by a fiend's desire  
to make them fond and foolish. Nature ne'ertheless  
singeth loud in her prison, and for all ecstasy  
these mystics find no language but to echo again  
the psalm of her captivity; nay, furthermore,  
the doctrin esoteric in their rapt divines

440

450

#### IV

and their diviner poets—this the novice knew—  
is the rëincarnation of their renounced desire.

Repudiation of pleasur is a reason'd folly  
of imperfection. Ther is no motiv can rebate  
or decompose the intrinsic joy of activ life,  
whereon all function whatsoever in man is based.

460

Consider how this mortal sensibility  
hath a wide jurisdiction of range in all degrees,  
from mountainous gravity to imperceptible  
faintest tenuities:—The imponderable fragrance  
of my window-jasmin, that from her starry cup  
of red-stemm'd ivory invadeth my being,  
as she floateth it forth, and wantoning unabash'd  
asserteth her idea in the omnipotent blaze  
of the tormented sun-ball, checquering the grey wall  
with shadow-tracery of her shapely fronds; this frail  
unique spice of perfumery, in which she holdeth  
monopoly by royal licence of Nature,

470

is but one of a thousand angelic species,  
original beauties that win conscience in man:  
a like marvel hangeth o'er the rosebed, and where  
the honeysuckle escapeth in serpentine sprays  
from its dark-cloister'd clamber thru' the old holly-bush,  
spreading its joybunches to finger at the sky  
in revel above rivalry. Legion is their name;  
Lily-of-the-vale, Violet, Verbena, Mignonette,

480

## IV

Hyacinth, Heliotrope, Sweet-briar, Pinks and Peas,  
 Lilac and Wallflower, or such white and purple blooms  
 that sleep i' the sun, and their heavy perfumes withhold  
 to mingle their heart's incense with the wonder-dreams,  
 love-laden prayers and reveries that steal forth from earth,  
 under the dome of night: and tho' these blossomy breaths,  
 that hav presumed the title of their gay genitors,  
 enter but singly into our neighboring sense, that hath 490  
 no panorama, yet the mind's eye is not blind  
 unto their multitudinous presences:—I know  
 that if odour wer visible as color is, I'd see  
 the summer garden aureoled in rainbow clouds,  
 with such warfare of hues as a painter might choose  
 to show his sunset sky or a forest aflame;  
 while o'er the country-side the wide clover-pastures  
 and the beanfields of June would wear a mantle, thick  
 as when in late October, at the drooping of day  
 the dark grey mist arising blotteth out the land 500  
 with ghostly shroud. Now these and such-like influences  
 of tender specialty must not—so fine they be—  
 fall in neglect and all their loveliness be lost,  
 being to the soul deep springs of happiness, and full  
 of lovingkindness to the natural man, who is apt  
 kindly to judge of good by comfortable effect.  
 Thus all men ever hav judged the wholesomness of food  
 from the comfort of body ensuing thereupon,

## IV

whereby all animals retrieve their proper diet;  
 but if when in discomfort 'tis for pleasant hope 510  
 of health restored we swallow nauseous medicines,  
 so mystics use asceticism, yea, and no man  
 readier than they to assert eventual happiness  
 to justify their conduct. Whence it is not strange  
 (for so scientific minds in search of truth digest  
 assimilable hypotheses) they should extend  
 their pragmatism, and from their happiness deduce  
 the very existence and the natur of God, and take  
 religious consolation for the ground of faith:  
 as if the pleasur of life wer the sign-manual 520  
 of Nature when she set her hand to her covenant.

But man, vain of his Reason and thinking more to assure  
 its independence, wil disclaim complicity  
 with human emotion; and regarding his Mother  
 deemeth it dutiful and nobler in honesty  
 coldly to criticize than purblindly to love;  
 and in pride of this quarrel he hath been led in the end  
 to make distinction of kind 'twixt Pleasur and Happiness;  
 observing truly enough how one may hav pleasure  
 and yet miss happiness; but this warpeth the sense 530  
 and common use of speech, since all tongues in the world  
 call children and silly folk happy and sometimes ev'n brutes.

The name of happiness is but a wider term  
 for the unalloy'd conditions of the Pleasur of Life,

#### IV

attendant on all function, and not to be deny'd  
to th' soul, unless forsooth in our thought of nature  
spiritual is by definition unnatural.

But I would not thus wrong nature; rather say I  
that as man realizeth his higher energies,  
the quality and value of his pleasures wil so change, 540  
that tho' the animal life-joy persist thru'out,  
yet his transported joy developing thereon  
cometh by excellence to need a special term.

And Aristotle in his tenth book thus summeth it—

“Whatso thatt faculty may be which hath in man

“natural governance and apprehendeth things

“noble and divine,—it is the energy (so saith he)

“of thatt faculty in its proper excellence, which is

“the Perfect Happiness;” and with his predicate

he assumeth the less perfect also, and lower states. 550

But these philosophers—their Ethick being concern'd  
with man's perfection—used the abstracted terms whereby  
they had pre-defined distinctions, which as they diverged  
in separat culmination obscured identity.

'Twas for that reason, I guess, that Aristotle himself  
so harpeth on his doctrin, as if he was aware  
that his conclusion had somehow miss'd its full premiss:

But if we see Spiritual, Mental and Animal

to be gradations merged together in growth and mix'd

in their gradations, and that the animal pleasure 560

## IV

runneth thru' out all grades heartening all energies,  
then Aristotle's wisdom goeth without saying;  
and the actual complexity of human conduct  
wil appear nature's order in the condition of growth;  
and so the trouble and wonderment of baulk'd insight  
may all be presently sponged from the treatises.

Altho' in the distinction of pleasures good and bad  
the unparagon'd nobility of the great virtues  
standeth without controversy among them that know  
—who instill them as duties—, yet they hav writ no rule 570  
nor rubric whereby conduct can in lesser affairs  
accommodate these principles, when they conflict  
in upright personalities, nor square their use  
with the intricat contingencies that knit our lives,  
and the interaction of unrelated sequences.  
In thatt uncharted jungle a good man wil go right,  
while an ill disposition wil miss and go wrong:  
yet in the worst we stil may find something to praise,  
in the lame child that stumbleth, or the canker'd bud;  
ev'n the poor blasted promise of desiderat fruit 580  
hath true relation to the absent beauty thereof.

Forever on the asses bridge and in the ship of fools  
life is agog; and there the Muse hath set her stage,  
and in humorous compact with philosophy  
hideth her godlike face beneath a grinning mask,  
and donning the gay motley of idiotic man



## IV

empersonateth him in his chance dilemmas;  
by the eternal comedy of the unfitness of things  
beguiling the disconsolat with sympathy  
and cheering contemplation with æsthetic mirth. 590  
Full many hav found happiness toiling all their time  
thus disporting with truth; and at carving such toys  
hav thru' love of children become Teachers of men:  
But here *I wol nat han to do of swich matere.*

Since then all promise of spiritual advancement  
lieth in two things, good disposition and (as 'twas said)  
right education, it followeth here to speak of these.

First then of Disposition.—Unless ther truly be  
more good than bad absolutely in the make of man,  
ther is no security for him and little hope, 600  
except the inherent harmony and unity of good  
be such as must in the end outweigh the surplusage  
of all discordant enmity; and this well may be:  
but should we inquire if Nature hath by any means  
inclined man's disposition to the virtuous choice,  
we may find how she hath done this, and by the energy  
of the imitativ faculty hath assured her end.

'For Mimicry is inborn in man from childhood up:  
"and in this differeth he from other animals,  
"being the most imitativ: and his first approach 610  
"to learning maketh he in mimicry, and hath delight

## IV

"in imitations of all kinds." I would indeed that Aristotle had set this pregnant verity in forefront of his *Ethick* also, as now 'tis found to stablish his *Poetick*; for the assumption of it here and there in the *Morals* escapeth notice and all the consequences thereof are unseen. But if the cradled child imitateth the shows that happen around him, he for-sure wil most attend to those that most attract, and must therefore be drawn and held by the inborn love of Beauty unconsciently of preference to imitate the more beautiful things. And because Virtue is an activity, and lieth not in doctrin and theory but in practice and conduct, co-ordinating potencies into energy, (and here 'tis Aristotle again speaketh, not I) the preferential imitation of right action is **THE HABIT OF VIRTUE**: and thus a child well-bred in good environment, so soon as he is aware of personality, wil know and think himself a virtuous being and instinctivly, in the proud realization of Self common to all animals, becometh to be his own ideal, a such-a-one as would **WILL** and **DO** this (saith he) and never do thatt, refraining there from shame, consenting here for love, winning new beauty of soul from the embrace of beauty, and strength by practised combat against folly and wrong,

620

630

## IV

to perfect as he may his idea of himself.

Spiritual life being thus imagin'd in the child  
thru' conscient personality and love of beauty, 640  
—which on so tender a plant budding hath power to bear  
the richest fruit of all creation, incomparable—  
ther is nought in all his nurtur of more intrinsic need  
than is the food of Beauty: as mammal's milk to his flesh,  
which admitteth no proxy, so Beauty is to his soul,  
that calleth for this comforting of nature's breast,  
tho' its outcries be unheard when it pineth in pain:  
and since the hunger of mimicry is so strong in him,  
that in the lack of milk 'twil ravin gall, and draw  
infection and death from evil as quickly as life from good, 650  
the first intrinsic need in education is found.

Thus Christ, who knew what was in man and taught  
man's perfect happiness to be the wonted realm  
of heav'n within his heart, spake thus *Take bede* (he said)  
*Se that ye offende not won of these litell wons:*  
and once again on this wise, "If ther be any sin  
"unpardonable even in the wide compassion of God,  
"tis the denial and blasphemy of his Holy Spirit,  
"and the quenching in others of its nascent flame."

Delicat and subtle are the dealings of nature, 660  
whereby the emotionable sense secretly is touch'd  
to awareness and by glimpse of heav'nly vision drawn  
within the attraction of the creativ energy

## IV

that is the ultimat life of all being soe'er:

While Science sitteth apart in her exile, attent  
on her other own invisibles; and working back  
to the atoms, she handleth their action to harness  
the gigantic forces of eternal motion,  
in serviceable obedience to man's mortal needs;  
and not to be interrupted nor call'd off her task,  
dreaming, amid the wonders of her sightly works,  
thru' her infinitesimals to arrive at last  
at the unsearchable immensities of Goddes realm.

670

But while the intellectual faculty is yet unborn,  
spiritual things to children are even as Music is,  
thatt firstborn pleasur of animal conscience that now  
hath for its human honour its origin forgot;  
the which a child absorbeth readily and without thought,  
tho' in after years, if thatt initiation hav lack'd,  
scarce can a man by grammar come at the elements.

680

Their twain affinity may be seen also in this,  
that both are companied by the same full delight  
of progress in performance, while the same method  
serveth for both; if but the teacher be himself  
virtuous or musical—an exemplar as such,  
he wil be keenly follow'd, and often in his love  
that his pupil surpass him is his best reward.

Of intellectual training 'tis not here to tell;

## IV

thatt cometh later, and then the trouble is evermore  
 the lack of teachers; yet wer teachers plentiful, 690  
 and gentle environment as common as bramble-scrub,  
 never coud human wit discern to accommodate  
 the countless idiosyncracies of mind withal;  
 indeterminable are they and never can be told.

But 'twere well to consider in what a fusty crypt  
 the awakening mind is caged when—like a butterfly  
 that newly hath slipp'd its crysalis to sport i' the sun—  
 it thrusteth out its finely adapted tentacles  
 in their first palping movements to the encounter of life,  
 with confidence exploring its nativ yearnings. 700

How, when this apprehensiv expectancy is met  
 by fenced obstruction! How, when ev'n the syllables  
 which with such duteous pains the child had learn'd to tongue,  
 the secret spell whereat the fabled treasure-house  
 should open its doors—how, when thatt magic Sesamē  
 hath proved a foreign jargon and, like a rusty key,  
 by long mishandling already hath hamper'd the lock!  
 How should not childish effort, thus thwarted and teased,  
 recoil dishearten'd bruized and stupefy'd beneath  
 the rough-shod inculcation of inculcated minds, 710  
 case-harden'd by their own thoughtless reiterations?

The mud-fish may be happy and at home in the pond,  
 but live Imagination, conscient of its joy,  
 ranketh oft with the dunces in such scholarship,

## IV

finding its happiness in freedom to mature  
the personality of its nativ potency.  
Others in after-growth at heavy cost repair  
their early damage, since in intellectual things  
all errors are remediable; but 'tis not so  
in the spiritual life, nay ev'n the soul wash'd pure  
of absorb'd taint may take a strange gloss of the lye.

720

Of two young thoro'breeds galoping neck to neck  
I'd choose the colt that with least effort held his course.  
Of two runners abreast my liking would crown him  
who had greater grace of limb and show'd no trouble of face,  
tho' he by such complacency might miss the prize:  
But virtue in the soldier is the martyr's heart  
that, battling for supremacy, out-stayeth defeat,  
firing the citadel ere he yield it to the foe:  
and 'tis nobility that pulleth our favour  
upon the weaker side in any unequal match.

730

Now in spiritual combat, altho' I must deem  
them the most virtuous who with least effort excell,  
yet, virtue being a conflict, moralisers hold  
that where conflict is hardest virtue must be at best;  
and in the rub of life and physical hindrance  
a man who has striven heroically and done great deeds,  
in spite of frailty or bodily disease or pain,  
may win more admiration and praise in the end than he

#### IV

who with comfort to himself, indolently as it wer, 740  
 hath done as well; nay, for the very impediments  
 may ev'n be envied, as old navigators wer  
 in the glory they had got to hav outridden their storms.  
 And yet from Zion's hill-top to the Dead-Sea shore,  
 between the Teacher sitting on the Mount and them,  
 the nethermost unfortunats, that cannot learn,—  
 in all the mid-mass crowding on the flowery slopes,  
 hearers o' the Word, ther is little difference to be told:  
 The same incarnat traitor routeth in all hearts;  
 nay, since 'tis an æsthetic delicacy of mind 750  
 that, refining the enticement of carnal pleasure,  
 voideth the shame, the elect are oft in straits extreme:  
 the mastery of warriorship, their apparent grace,  
 was won by disciplin of deadly strife: in them  
 ease is no indolence: indolence rather is theirs  
 who, ill-disposed to training, are unexercised  
 in good habit of war; and 'tis the lack thereof  
 maketh the soldier unready and the conflict so hard,  
 rather than any unwonted virulence or rage  
 of the onslaught; for thatt same happeneth anon to all. 760

AND here my thought plungeth into the darksome grove  
 and secret penetralia of ethic lore, wherein  
 I hav wander'd often and long and thought to know my way,

## IV

and now shall go retracing my remember'd paths,  
 tho' no lute ever sounded there nor Muse hath sung,  
 deviously in the obscure shadows, and none follow me  
 entering where erst I enter'd, and all enter free,  
 at the great clearing made by Socrates of yore,  
 when he said KNOW THYSELF; for true to his chief premiss  
 that ignorance is the root of all men's folly, he taught 770  
 to turn the lamp of Reason inwardly upon the mind.  
 And truly with that keen Γνώθι σεαυτόν of his  
 was great felling of trees: for not Socrates knew  
 nor any hath ever kenn'd how man thinketh; and less  
 how thought thinketh itself; nor how in that province  
 Reason hath right to rule; nor of what stuff the reins  
 can be, wherewith the Charioteer bridled the steeds  
 in that same vision of his which Plato saith he told  
 to Phædrus, as they sat together on the banks  
 of the Ilissus talking of the passions of men. 780

All terrestrial Life, in all functions and motions,  
 operateth thru' alliance of living entities  
 disparat in their structure but logically  
 correlated in action under some final cause.  
 Suchlike co-ordinations may be acquired in man  
 with reason'd purpose consciently, as when a learner  
 on viol or flute diligently traineth his hand  
 to the intricat fingering of the stops and strings;



#### IV

or may be innate, as the spontaneous flight of birds;  
or antenatal and altogether inconscient, 790  
as the food-organs, call'd vegetativ because  
such cellular connivance is the life of plants.

The main co-ordinations whereon life hangeth  
wer ever automatous, and such states when acquired  
tend to become self-working as they are perfected,  
dropping out of our ken: the proverb truly spake  
*Habit is second nature*, and 'twil function best  
without superintendence, for the least brain-wave  
or timid rippling of self-consciousness can rob  
the bodily movements of their nativ grace. 800

Now these perfected unify'd organities,  
whether of inconscient birth or such as when acquired  
proudly stand off from conscience, all act in response  
to external stimulants that vary in kind, and range  
from mere material contact to untraceable thought.

Thus the digestiv kind is stirr'd by touch of food  
within the body, or by the sight or sound or smell  
of the object, or ev'n by the unconscious thought thereof;  
and thence thru' appetite by mere thought of the sense;  
and can decipher a message in the secret code 810  
of language, and prick up at sound of the symbol:  
For never can those privy-councilors in the brain  
withhold official knowledge from the corporat mind;  
ther is no deliberation or whisper'd thought, not ev'n

## IV

unspoken intention among them, but it wil leak out  
to thatt swarming intelligence where life began,  
and where ideas wander at liberty to find  
their procreativ fellowship; thatt fluid sea  
in which all problems, spiritual or logical  
æsthetic mathematic or practic, resolve 820  
melting as icebergs launch'd on the warm ocean-stream:  
and wheresoe'er this corporat alchemy is at best,  
'tis call'd by all men GENIUS, and its aptitudes  
like virtuous disposition may be inherited.

Thus must all kind of stimulus hav come some way  
across the misty march-land, whereon men would fix  
their disputable boundary between Matter and Mind,  
—as every sensation must suffer translation  
ere it can mediate in the live machinery  
of any final cause or purpose: whence 'twould seem 830  
that science went astray thinking to appropriate  
some nervous reactions wholly to her material sphere,  
and rather should hav thought to extend the mental field.

Now this spontaneous life oweth nought to Reason  
(the conscient faculty which Socrates invoked);  
and so her claim to be the "very consciousness  
of things judging themselves" is "vain above measure":  
for every Essence hath its own Idea, and so  
cometh thereby to its own full conscient life in man:  
for-sure the idea of Beauty is not Reason's idea, 840

## IV

nor hath Reason the idea of Courage or of Mirth,  
 of Faith or Love or Poetry or of Music's delight;  
 if Reason as an essence owneth to any idea,  
 let her make good her claim and therewith be content:  
 so be it; and surely Reason's property will be  
 the idea of Order;—and if so, I think to find  
 how by the very natur of her own faculty  
 she was deceived to imagin its universal scope;  
 for since all natur is order'd (nor none wil deny  
 that 'tis by Reason alone we are of such order aware),  
 all things must of their ordinance come in her court  
 for judgment; and 'twas thus Pythagoras coud hold  
 NUMBER to be the universal essence of things:  
 nay, see the starry atoms in the seed-plot of heav'n  
 stripp'd to their nakedness are nothing but Number;  
 and see how Mathematick rideth as a queen  
 cheer'd on her royal progress thru'out nature's realm;  
 see how physical Science, which is Reason's trade  
 and high profession, booketh ever and docketeth  
 all things in order and pattern; how Philosophy,  
 shuttling out in the unknown like a hungry spider,  
 blindly spinneth her geometric webs, testing  
 and systematizing even her own disorders,  
 her solipsism and her gossamer ontologies  
 gnostic or cabbalist: and 'twas thus Socrates  
 coud evoke Reason to order and disciplin the mind—

850

860

#### IV

the divine Logos that should shine in the darkness,—  
a good physician who must heal himself withal.

[The assumed docility is by English moralists  
term'd the 'Good Will' and fetch'd in as 'twere from without;      870  
yet 'tis but the old animal instinct of selfhood  
to'ard realization, which continueth on  
with the animal promoted to spiritual life;  
wherein desire for betterment is the promise  
and premiss of all virtue; or if the willingness  
be but desire of knowledge, thatt wil find the goal  
where Truth and Virtue and Beauty are all as one.]

Now seeing the aim of Socrates we must inquire  
what the Mind's contents are; how disorder'd; and why  
ther should in the good mind be any disorder at all.      880

*What the Mind is*, this thing bidden to know itself?  
First I bethink me naturally of every man  
as a unique creature, a personality  
in whom we lucidly distinguish body and mind,  
and talk readily of either tho' inseparable  
and mutually dependent, together or apart  
the created expression of Universal Mind.  
And of the body I think as the machinery  
of our terrestrial life evolving towards conscience  
in the Ring of Reality; and thence of the mind      890

## IV

as thatt evolved conscience, the which in every-one  
is different, as the body differeth also in each.

And human Intellect I see form'd and compact  
of the essential Ideas, wherewith soever each man  
hath come in contact personally, and in so far  
as he is kindly disposed to absorb their influences  
to build his personality; and since all ideas  
come to him thru' the senses, thatt old proviso  
*nisi ipse intellectus* is futile to me;  
for *intellectus* here seemeth to exclude itself,  
as being thatt all-receptiv conscient energy  
which is the mind of man; thatt ultimat issue  
of the arch-creativ potency of Being, wherefrom  
the senses took existence. Thus I come to think  
that if the mind held all ideas in plenitude  
'twould be complete, at one with natur and harmonized  
with as good harmony as we may find in nature.

900

Now as our optic science teacheth pure white light  
to be the consummation of all the color-bands  
into which by diffraction it can be separated,  
whereof if any ray went missing, the sunlight  
wer impure and imperfect (or so we may think);  
a suchlike imperfection must be in all men's minds,  
because the complemental ideas parcel'd in each  
are incomplete, being only such as thatt one man  
may hav happ'd on, and those only in the measure whereby

910

#### IV

he is tuned to take cognisance of them: thus it is  
all men differ each from each, since neither environment  
nor disposition can ever in any two men  
be the same or alike, and therefor (as was said) 920  
true individuality within the species  
would seem reach'd in mankind. Again likewise 'tis seen  
how national mentalities are mutually  
incomprehensible and irreconcilable;  
since each group as it rose was determin'd apart  
by conditions of life which none other could share  
by climate, language, and historic tradition  
estranging evermore; nor are such obstinate bonds  
the weaker for any intrinsic absurdity:  
Nay, see the Armenian folk in their snow-burrows, 930  
as if distrustful of their high mountainous plateau  
between the seas, have riveted their patriotism  
by stubborn adherence to an ancient heresy,  
a paradox anent the two natures of Christ,  
which some theologic bishop, peering in the fog  
of his own exhalations, thought pleasing to God;  
altho' no creature might possibly understand it.  
Again from this same cause it will follow no less  
that men commonly run so near to the average;  
for the animal ideas are common property 940  
and, being the greatest common measure of all mankind,  
will stand-out as the mean statistical features.

#### IV

Again we now may see—and 'tis pleasant to see—  
how simple characters hav such extreme beauty,  
for that the soul's nobility consisteth not  
in riches of imagination or intellect  
but in harmony of Essences, which hath full power  
where a few fundamentals in purity attain  
their self-cöordination; as honest pots and pans  
may for their unsophisticated beauty excell  
a prize diploma-picture of our academy:  
like as in music, when true voices blend in song,  
the perfect intonation of the major triad  
is sweetest of all sounds; its inviting embrace  
resolveth all discords; and all the ambitious flights  
of turbulent harmony come in the end to rest  
with the fulfilment of its liquidating cloze.

950

Again we hence rebutt thatt old dilemma of Art,  
which would set man in lordly enmity against nature  
for that his pensiv play transcendeth her beauty;  
—as when Sebastian preludeth, all her voices  
that ever hav reach'd our ears are crest-fal'n and abash'd:  
for tho' man cannot wield her infinit resource  
of delicacy and strength, yet hath he in lieu thereof  
a range triumphant, where his exorbitant thought  
defying Space and Time hath power to blend all things  
visible and invisible, and freely redispense  
every essence that he knoweth, to parcel them at will—

960

## IV

or so he thinketh—, like an occult magician  
 whose summons all spirits must attend and obey, 970  
 from the heart-blaze of heaven to the unvisited deep;  
 tho' he hav no wizardry to exorcise them withal.

Now this dilemma (I say) is rebutted hereby,  
 because man's faculty of creation, rare in him  
 and not at his command, is but Nature herself,  
 who danceth in her garden at the blossöming-time  
 'mong the flowers of her setting; and tho' true it be  
 that Art needeth as full devotion and diligence  
 in the performance as doth Virtue, yet i' the mind 980  
 of the artist Nature's method surely is on this wise;—  
 the Ideas which thru' the senses hav found harborage,  
 being come to mortal conscience work-out of themselves  
 their right co-ordinations and, creatively  
 seeking expression, draw their natural imagery  
 from the same sensuous forms whereby they found entrance;  
 thus linking up with all the long tradition of Art.

The manner of this magic is purest in musick,  
 but by the learner is seen more clearly in poetry,  
 wherein each verbal symbol exposeth its idea;  
 so that 'tis manifest by what promptings of thought 990  
 the imaginativ landscape is built and composed,  
 and how horizon'd: And the secret of a poem  
 lieth in this intimat echo of the poet's life.

Now in its selfcreativness the manner of Art



## IV

cannot be simulated, altho' Mimicry  
 is Beauty's cradle: But, as in the Spirit of Man  
 all manner of grades are found, so wil it be in his Art,  
 with such disorder of thought as is not here to tell;  
 for every man, whom Beauty hath laid beneath her spell,  
 —tho' but by glimpse or dream, and him full ignorant 1000  
 of what idea hath moved him and ev'n by what means;—  
 wil feel about to express some mintage of himself,  
 by imitation or birdlike hymeneal lilt,  
 to fix his hold on joy, his COGITO ERGO SUM.  
 Thus may a jingle of words fasten his faith on God,  
 as schoolboys memorize their lesson better in rhyme.

Inasmuch then as the ideas in any one mind  
 are a promiscuous company muster'd at random,  
 ther wil be such disorder as Reason can perceive  
 and may hav skill to amend; but tho' we grant her art 1010  
 valid in principle and salutary in effect,  
 the debit of failure is heavy in her accounts.  
 Yet we discredit not all Medicine because  
 ther be incurable maladies that end in death,—  
 nor yet because the leech, when he is call'd in to heal  
 an indigestiv stomach, can hav no dealing  
 directly with the embroil'd co-ordinating cells,—  
 and, for the lack of any intelligent knowledge  
 of their intimat bickerings, wil hav recourse

## IV

to palliatives and sentimental assurances 1020  
 of favorable conditions, exercise and air,  
 hoping thus to entice them to a better behaviour,—  
 or observing some chemical excess in their chyme  
 wil deftly neutralize it with a pinch of salt;  
 so we shall also allow Reason her claim to rule:  
 and to judge by oneself, as each man must, I find  
 Reason wil diagnose the common ailment of Mind  
 a lack of harmony; for with the Ideas at war  
 —now one Idea in mastery and now another,  
 acting at call o' the moment indiscriminately,— 1030  
 the man is foolish, unreasonable as we say,  
 inept, without set purpose, weak of will; whereas  
 if all should work together in concert, he wil be  
 determin'd and consistent: And I see man's Will  
 is here no independent concentrated force,  
 like the steel spring box'd-up in a French clock and wound  
 for local distribution, but is rather itself  
 the concentrating of a predistributed  
 intrinsic power;—the emotions, passions and desires,  
 concurrent with the Ideas, being surely of themselves 1040  
 wilful enough, and able among themselves at strife  
 to make a fool, and in co-ordination a sage.

WILL, then, in the good mind a sustain'd harmony,  
 is in the bad a dissonance, or it may be a strange  
 co-ordination, or the tyranny of one idea;

#### IV

from which our great civic convulsions mostly arise  
and popular rebellions, when the Demagog  
hath fulminated some mighty essential idea,  
which entereth wildly into the loose minds of the herd  
and, finding there no governance, runneth riot 1050  
and, drawing all wilful authority to itself,  
wil seem the only live thing; like a firebrand at night  
flaring afar, that i' the sunlight wer a troublous smoke:  
and if such insurrection by contagion attain  
predominance uncontrollable, to the overthrow  
of any existing rule, then the Will of the folk  
is dubb'd by history's pen the WILL OF GOD.  
But since this over-mastering prevalent idea  
may be good in itself while it wreaketh but wrong,  
and since I see that all human activities 1060  
may be order'd equally for ravage or defence,  
Reason herself here questioneth me how I trust  
her mere ordering of life to make for happiness—  
whereto my answer is my good faith in what I hav writ.

How the mind of man from inconscient existence  
cometh thru' the animal by growth of reasoning  
to'ard spiritual conscience hath been duly told:  
And Reason—being essentially (as in place 'twas found)  
the idea of Order, and thus itself the appurtenance  
of essences, with them passing from physical 1070  
unto spiritual order in a mind ended

## IV

with conscience of the higher spiritual essences—  
 Reason (say I) wil rise to awareness of its rank  
 in the Ring of Existence, where man looketh up  
 to the first cause of all; and wil itself decree  
 and order discreetly the attitude of the soul  
 seeking self-realization in the vision of God,  
 becoming at the last thatt arch-conscience of all,  
 to which the Greek sage who possess'd it made appeal.

The attraction of this motion is our conscience of it, 1080  
 our love of wisdom and of beauty; and the attitude  
 of those attracted wil be joyful obedience  
 with reverence to'ard the omnificent Creator  
 and First Cause, whose Being is thatt beauty and wisdom  
 which is to be apprehended only and only approach'd  
 by right understanding of his creation, and found  
 in thatt habit of faith which some thinkers hav styled  
*The Life of Reason*; and this only true bond of love  
 and reasonable relation (if relation ther be)  
 'twixt creature and creator, man and nature's God, 1090  
 the which we call *Religion*,—is fundamental,  
 physically and metaphysically in fashion  
 or force undistinguishable from Duty itself:  
 sprung from the same primal reality, it also  
 aborted in like dolorous superstition, when  
 the first-born intimations of spiritual life  
 scared man's animal mind, that in childish terror

## IV

seeking protection from the unseen, fenced his dark cave  
 with codes of fearful fantasy and—flush'd by the stir  
 of the irresistible impulse which drave him (yea, still 1100  
 driveth) with fierce exultation (albeit we deplore  
 thatt barbarous aberration),—with credulous magic  
 cloggeth his airy spirit and discrediteth  
 his Reason and Faith alike . . . . so old a trouble and great  
 that the honest indictment of the Epicurean  
 goeth unrefuted, and his famous verse TANTUM  
 RELIGIO POTUIT SUADERE MALORUM  
 yet ringeth true as when he thought to benefit  
 mankind, and from his woes rescue him for ever,  
 drowning the thought of God from off the face of the earth 1110  
 in his deluge of atoms; and made in the mind  
 a second Void, the which his sect should keep inane  
 by the inventiv levity of their enlightenment;  
 til, as with animals that hav fasted too long  
 and aking within for their emptiness wil eat  
 too greedily, we see in our fellows today  
 fresh recrudescence of forgonn superstition;  
 the while our generation, sicken'd by the grime  
 of murky slums, slag-heaps and sooty bushes,  
 wil plan garden-cities and for her soilure make 1120  
 reddition to Nature, replanting the fair lands  
 which our industrial grandsires disaforested.

This hankering after lost Beauty, in sickness of heart

## IV

a disconsolat sentiment, is the remnant grace  
of nature's covenant, the starved germ *athirst for God*  
*ev'n for the living God*, that singeth in the psalm  
QUEMADMODUM CERVUS, and now amidst the blank  
tyranny of ugliness maketh many a rebel  
pining for enlargement and plotting to recall  
thatt old arrant exile who, for all her mischief,  
hid neath her cloak the master-key of happiness.

1130

In truth "spiritual animal" wer a term for man  
nearer than "rational" to define his genus;  
Faith being the humanizer of his brutal passions,  
the clarifier of folly and medicine of care,  
the clue of reality, and the driving motiv  
of thatt self-knowledge which teacheth the ethick of life.

And yet hath PRAYER, the heav'n-breathing foliage of faith,  
found never a place in ethick: for Philosophy  
filtering out delusions from her theory of life,  
in dread of superstition gave religion away  
to priests and monks, who rich in their monopoly  
furbish and trim the old idols, that they dare not break,  
for fear of the folk and need of good disciplin.  
But since all men alike, in any strain of heart  
or great emotion of soul, credulous or sceptic, fall  
instinctivly to prayer for thatt solace and strength  
which they who use the habit may be seen to hav found—

1140

#### IV

nay, had Prayer no effect other than reverence  
 for the self-knowledge, which the Greek enjoin'd, whereby 1150  
 'tis sovrain to bind character, concentrate Will,  
 and purify intention—nay, ev'n so 'twould claim  
 a place among the causes of determin'd flux.

Ah! tho' it may be a simple thing in reach of all,  
 Best ever is rare, a toilsome guerdon; and prayer is like  
 those bodily exercises that athletes wil use,  
 which each must humbly learn, and ere he win to power  
 so diligently practice, and in such strict course  
 as wil encroach unkindly on the agreements of life:  
 whence men slouch in the laxity that they call ease, 1160  
 rather than rouse to acquiring thatt strength, without which  
 the body cannot know the pleasur of its full ease,  
 the leisur of strength in the hard labor of life.

Now every emotion hath the bodily expression  
 beseeming each; and since the body cannot be  
 without some attitude, so Prayer wil hav its own:  
 and here just as in any athletic exercise  
 ther be postures and motions foolish in themselves  
 and often undignified, so too the postur of prayer  
 may shame our pride of spirit, which would grudge the limbs 1170  
 warrant of entry upon her sacred solitudes;  
 albeit the body come there in full abject guise  
 to do submission and pay fealty to the soul:

## IV

And since our speech, in its mere vocal cries and calls,  
 hath less natural beauty and true significance  
 than the bodily gestures which convey our desires,  
 so ev'n the words of prayer wil lack in dignity  
 and seem impertinent; as full often they be,  
 and ever had been, unless man's language had upgrown  
 from makeshift unto mastery of his thought, and learn'd 1180  
 by its fine musing art to redeem for his soul  
 the beauty of holiness, marrying creatively  
 his best earthly delight with his heav'nliest desire,  
 when he calleth on God, *Send forth thy light and truth  
 that they may lead me and bring me unto thy Holy Hill,  
 to thatt fair place which is the joy of the whole earth.*

See! ther is never dignity in a concourse of men,  
 save only as some spiritual gleam hearteneth the herd.  
 Any idea whatsoe'er new-born to consciousness,  
 if it infect the folk, taketh repetend life 1190  
 and exuberant difformity of disorder'd growth  
 from physical communion of emotion and thought;  
 and of its nascent appetency 'twil embrace  
 affinity in its host, to stagger and eliminate  
 all other ideas, thus impropotionably  
 surmounting its own province in Nature's order;  
 so that unless itself it be a thing of Beauty,  
 insurmountable of kind, more beauteous in excess—  
 as when the glow reverberating in a golden cup



#### IV

multiplyeth the splendour,—it cometh that the herd,  
being in its empassionment ever irrational,  
wil even of harmless enthusiasm breed disgrace. 1200

Thus in our English sport, the spectacular games,  
where tens of thousands flock throttling the entrance-gates  
like sheep to th' pen, wherein they sit huddled to watch  
the fortune o' the football, ther is often here and there  
mid the seething glomeration of thatt ugly embankment  
of gazing faces, one that came to enjoy the sight  
knowingly, and yet looketh little on the contest: to him  
the crowd is the spectacle; its wrestle and agony 1210  
is more than the actors, and its contagion so thick  
and irresistible, that ere he feel surprise  
he too may find himself, yea philosophy and all,  
carried away—as when a strong swimmer in the sea  
who would regain the shore, is by the headlong surf  
toss'd out of action, and like a drifted log roll'd up  
breathless and unresisting on the roaring beach.

But if he join the folk, when at the cloze of Lent  
they kneel in the vast dimness of a city church,  
while on the dense silence the lector's chant treadeth 1220  
from cadence to cadence the long dolorous way  
of the great passion of Christ,—or anon when they rise  
to free their mortal craving in the exultant hymn  
that ringeth with far promise of eternal peace . . .  
or should it happen to him, in strange lands far from home,

## IV

to watch the Moslem host, when at their hour of prayer  
 they troop in wild accoutrement their long-drill'd line  
 motionless neath the sun upon the Arabian sands,  
 hush'd to th' Imám's solemnel invocation of God,  
 as their proud tribal savagely draweth strength 1230  
 from the well-spring of life,—then at the full Amen  
 of their deep-throated respond he wil feel his spirit  
 drawn into kinship and their exaltation his own;  
 the more that he himself can be no part thereof,  
 incomprehensible because comprehending:  
 —and they be muddied pools whereat the herd water.

Such is the dignity of prayer in the common folk;  
 and its humility is the robe of intellect.  
 So whenever it hath been by some mystics renounced  
 in sanctuary of their sublime abstraction—as if 1240  
 utter abnegation had left no manners else to abjure,—  
 they appear to lack in use and duty of fellowship.  
 Yet in such solitaries, pallid clerks of heaven,  
 souls blanch'd for lack of sunjoys (as 'twould seem to hav been),  
 their contemplation (it may be) of very intensity  
 generateth ideas of higher irradiance;  
 for ideas born to human personality,  
 having their proper attractions like as atom or cell,  
 from soul to soul pass freely; and 'twas this mystery,  
 whereof they kenn'd the need who set the clause i' the creed, 1250  
 which, compelling belief in the COMMUNION OF SAINTS,

#### IV

foldeth the sheep in pastures of eternal life.

Nor doubt I that as this thinking machinery  
perisheth with the body, so animal thought  
with all its whimper and giggle must perish therewith,  
with all shames, all vain ostentation and ugliness,  
and all personality of all other ideas;  
except it be that, like as in unconscious things  
whence conscience came, ther is also thru' out conscient life  
the same emergent evolution, persisting  
in our spiritual life to the goal of conscience. 1260

This mind perisheth with this body, unless  
the personal co-ordination of its ideas  
hav won to Being higher than animal life,  
at thatt point where the Ring cometh upward to reach  
the original creativ Energy which is God,  
with conscience entering into life everlasting.

'TWAS at thatt hour of beauty when the setting sun  
squandereth his cloudy bed with rosy hues, to flood  
his lov'd works as in turn he biddeth them Good-night;  
and all the towers and temples and mansions of men  
face him in bright farewell, ere they creep from their pomp  
naked beneath the darkness;—while to mortal eyes  
'tis given, ifso they close not of fatigue, nor strain 1270

## IV

at lamplit tasks—'tis given, as for a royal boon  
to beggarly outcasts in homeless vigil, to watch  
where uncurtain'd behind the great windows of space  
Heav'n's jewel'd company circleth unapproachably—

'Twas at sunset that I, fleeing to hide my soul  
in refuge of beauty from a mortal distress, 1280  
walk'd alone with the Muse in her garden of thought,  
discoursing at liberty with the mazy dreams  
that came wavering pertinaciously about me; as when  
the small bats, issued from their hangings, flutter o'erhead  
thru' the summer twilight, with thin cries to and fro  
hunting in muffled flight atween the stars and flowers.

Then fell I in strange delusion, illusion strange to tell;  
for as a man who lyeth fast asleep in his bed  
may dream he waketh, and that he walketh upright  
pursuing some endeavour in full conscience—so 'twas 1290  
with me; but contrawise; for being in truth awake  
methought I slept and dreamt; and in thatt dream methought  
I was telling a dream; nor telling was I as one  
who, truly awaked from a true sleep, thinketh to tell  
his dream to a friend, but for his scant remembrances  
findeth no token of speech—it was not so with me;  
for my tale was my dream and my dream the telling,  
and I remember wondring the while I told it  
how I told it so tellingly. And yet now 'twould seem  
that Reason inveigled me with her old orderings; 1300

#### IV

as once when she took thought to adjust theology,  
peopling the inane that vex'd her between God and man  
with a hierarchy of angels; like those asteroids  
wherewith she later fill'd the gap 'twixt Jove and Mars.

Verily by Beauty it is that we come at WISDOM,  
yet not by Reason at Beauty: and now with many words  
pleasing myself betimes I am fearing lest in the end  
I play the tedious orator who maundereth on  
for lack of heart to make an end of his nothings.

Wherefor as when a runner who hath run his round  
handeth his staff away, and is glad of his rest,  
here break I off, knowing the goal was not for me  
the while I ran on telling of what cannot be told.

1310

For not the Muse herself can tell of Goddess love;  
which cometh to the child from the Mother's embrace,  
an Idea spacious as the starry firmament's  
inescapable infinity of radiant gaze,  
that fadeth only as it outpasseth mortal sight:  
and this direct contact is 't with eternities,  
this springtide miracle of the soul's nativity  
that oft hath set philosophers adrift in dream;  
which thing Christ taught, when he set up a little child  
to teach his first Apostles and to accuse their pride,  
saying, *Unless ye shall receive it as a child,*  
*ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

1320

## IV

So thru'out all his young mental apprenticeship  
 the child of very simplicity, and in the grace  
 and beauteous attitude of infantine wonder,  
 is apt to absorb Ideas in primal purity,  
 and by the assimilation of thatt immortal food 1330  
 may build immortal life; but ever with the growth  
 of understanding, as the sensible images  
 are more and more corrupt, troubled by questioning thought,  
 or with vainglory alloy'd, 'tis like enough the boy  
 in prospect of his manhood wil hav cast to th' winds  
 his Baptism with his Babyhood; nor might he escape  
 the fall of Ev'ryman, did not a second call  
 of nature's Love await him to confirm his Faith  
 or to revoke him if he is wholly lapsed therefrom.

And so mighty is this second vision, which cometh 1340  
 in puberty of body and adolescence of mind  
 that, forgetting his Mother, he calleth it "first Love";  
 for it mocketh at suasion or stubbornness of heart,  
 as the oecantide of the omnipotent Pleasur of God,  
 flushing all avenues of life, and unawares  
 by thousandfold approach forestalling its full flood  
 with divination of the secret contacts of Love,—  
 of faintest ecstacies aslumber in Nature's calm,  
 like thought in a closed book, where some poet long since  
 sang his throbbing passion to immortal sleep—with coy 1350  
 tenderness delicat as the shifting hues

## IV

that sanctify the silent dawn with wonder-gleams,  
whose evanescence is the seal of their glory,  
consumed in self-becoming of eternity;  
til every moment as it flyeth, cryeth "Seize!

Seize me ere I die! I am the Life of Life."

'Tis thus by near approach to an eternal presence  
man's heart with divine furor kindled and possess'd  
falleth in blind surrender; and finding therewithal  
in fullest devotion the full reconciliation  
betwixt his animal and spiritual desires,  
such welcome hour of bliss standeth for certain pledge  
of happiness perdurable: and could he sustain  
this great enthusiasm, then the unbounded promise  
would keep fulfilment; since the marriage of true minds  
is thatt once fabled garden, amidst of which was set  
the single Tree that bore such med'cinable fruit  
that if man ate thereof he should liv for ever.

1360

Friendship is in loving rather than in being lov'd,  
which is its mutual benediction and recompense;  
and tho' this be, and tho' love is from lovers learn'd,  
it springeth none the less from the old essence of self.  
No friendless man ('twas well said) can be truly himself;  
what a man looketh for in his friend and findeth,  
and loving self best, loveth better than himself,  
is his own better self, his live lovable idea,  
flowering by expansion in the loves of his life.

1370

## IV

And in the nobility of our earthly friendships  
 we hav all grades of attainment, and the best may claim  
 perfection of kind; and so, since ther be many bonds 1380  
 other than breed (friendships of lesser motiv, found  
 even in the brutes) and since our politick is based  
 on actual association of living men, 'twil come  
 that the spiritual idea of Friendship, the huge  
 vastidity of its essence, is fritter'd away  
 in observation of the usual habits of men;  
 as happ'd with the great moralist, where his book saith  
 that ther can be no friendship betwixt God and man  
 because of their unlimited disparity.

From this dilemma of pagan thought, this poison of faith, 1390  
 Man-soul made glad escape in the worship of Christ;  
 for his humanity is God's Personality,  
 and communion with him is the life of the soul.

Of which living ideas (when in the struggle of thought  
 harden'd by language they became symbols of faith)  
 Reason builded her maze, wherefrom none should escape,  
 wandering intent to map and learn her tortuous clews,  
 chanting their clerkly creed to the high-echoing stones  
 of their hand-fashion'd temple: but the Wind of heav'n  
 bloweth where it listeth, and Christ yet walketh the earth, 1400  
 and talketh still as with those two disciples once  
 on the road to Emmaus—where they walk and are sad;  
 whose vision of him then was his victory over death,



#### IV

thatt resurrection which all his lovers should share,  
who in loving him had learn'd the Ethick of happiness;  
whereby they too should come where he was ascended  
to reign over men's hearts in the Kingdom of God.

Our happiest earthly comradeships hold a foretaste  
of the feast of salvation and by thatt virtue in them  
provoke desire beyond them to out-reach and surmount 1410  
their humanity in some superhumanity  
and ultimat perfection: which, howe'er 'tis found  
or strangely imagin'd, answereth to the need of each  
and pulleth him instinctivly as to a final cause.  
Thus unto all who hav found their high ideal in Christ,  
Christ is to them the essence discern'd or undiscern'd  
of all their human friendships; and each lover of him  
and of his beauty must be as a bud on the Vine  
and hav participation in him; for Goddes love  
is unescapable as nature's environment, 1420  
which if a man ignore or think to thrust it off  
he is the ill-natured fool that runneth blindly on death.

This Individualism is man's true Socialism.  
This is the rife Idea whose spiritual beauty  
multiplieth in communion to transcendant might.  
This is thatt excelent way whereon if we wil walk  
all things shall be added unto us—thatt Love which inspired  
the wayward Visionary in his dóctrinal ode  
to the three christian Graces, the Church's first hymn

#### IV

and only deathless athanasian creed,—the which 1430  
 “except a man believe he cannot be savèd”.

This is the endearing bond whereby Christ’s company  
 yet holdeth together on the truth of his promise  
 that he spake of his great pity and trust in man’s love,  
*Lo, I am with you always ev’n to the end of the world.*

Truly the Soul returneth the body’s loving  
 where it hath won it . . . and God so loveth the world . . .  
 . and in the fellowship of the friendship of Christ  
 God is seen as the very self-essence of love,  
 Creator and mover of all as activ Lover of all, 1440  
 self-express’d in not-self, without which no self were.  
 In thought whereof is neither beginning nor end  
 nor space nor time; nor any fault nor gap therein  
 ’twixt self and not-self, mind and body, mother and child,  
 ’twixt lover and loved, God and man: but ONE ETERNAL  
 in the love of Beauty and in the selfhood of Love.

❧ F I N I S ❧

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## PUBLISHER'S NOTE ON THE TEXT

\*

THE slight approach to a simplified spelling in this book is copied from the author's MS., which the printer was instructed to follow. The simplification, as will be seen, is mainly confined to two particulars, namely the final *e* and the doubled consonant. Since this *e* is invariably mute he would reserve it to distinguish heavy from light syllables: thus *hav*, not *have*, and *liv* distinguished from *live*; and all the *-ate*, *-ile*, *-ive*, and *-ite* words can have their speech-values shown, as *steril* and *puerile*; and thus there is no confusion there.

And so the doubled consonant, which following the short vowel denotes its accentuation, is retained for that purpose: and this allows the useful distinction of the demonstrative pronoun *thatt*, from the other *thats* which have no proper accented vowel.

*Inconsistencies are intentional, any rule being stayed at*

that point where it would needlessly distract the reader: thus nature appears in two spellings, of which the explanation is that the final syllable (whether the word be pronounced as may be indicated by the spelling nāt<sup>i</sup>ur, or by nacher as recognized by our Southern English authorities) is always light and unaccented; but since the syllable tur has an uncertain value and is very offensive to the eye, the common full spelling, ture, is always maintained, except in those places where it suffers liquid synalœpha in the prosody, where the omission of the e guides the eye to the easy reading of the rhythm: and the author would explain that the use of æth for the 3rd per. sing. of verbs is not an archaic fancy, but a practical advantage, indispensable to him, not only for its syllabic lightness, but because by distinguishing verbs from the identical substantives, it sharpens the rhetoric and often liberates the syntax.

